

The Little Office
of
Our Lady



32

A handwritten number "32" in dark ink, written in a cursive style.

Mervyn Leinster

Ellis Roberts



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THE LITTLE OFFICE OF OUR LADY



THE
Little Office of our Lady

A TREATISE
THEORETICAL, PRACTICAL, AND EXEGETICAL

BY

ETHELRED L. TAUNTON

Priest of the Archdiocese of Westminster

"I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day or night."—ISAIAH lxii. 6

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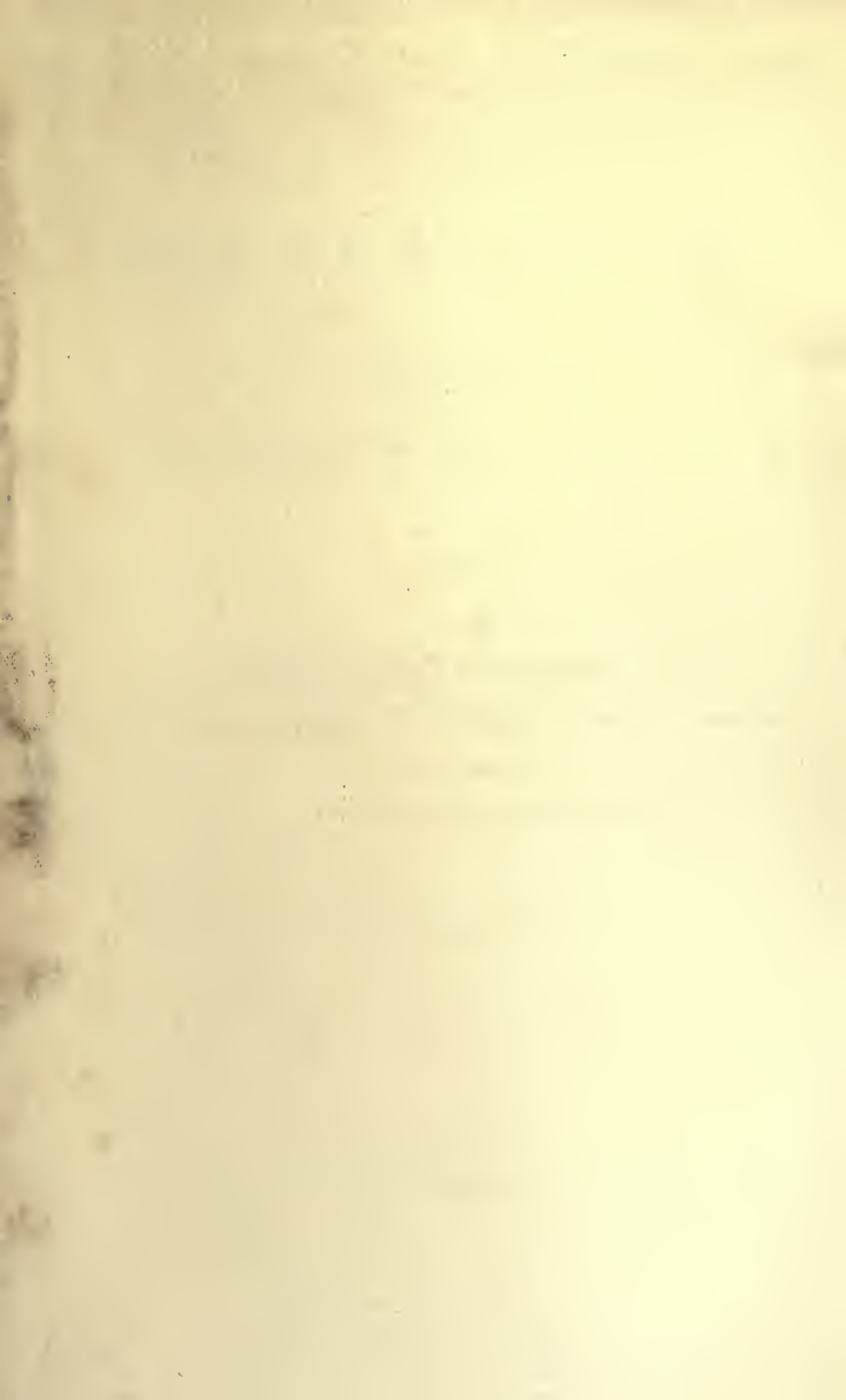
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TO

MISS C. P. BOYD,

FOUNDRESS OF THE ORPHANAGE OF THE INFANT SAVIOUR,

KILBURN, N.W.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF MUCH KINDNESS.

NIHIL OBSTAT

Joannes Gilbertus Dolan, O.S.B.,
Censor Debutatus.

IMPRIMATUR

+ Herbertus Cardinalis Vaughan,
Archiepiscopus Westmonasteriensis.

Die 16 Martii, 1903.

INTRODUCTION.

I HAVE written this treatise especially for those who by their vows are called upon to share in the public prayer of the Church. To my knowledge no adequate treatise, such as I have aimed at, exists in any language. And when one considers the thousands of souls who are bound to pay their service to God through the Little Office of our Lady, it is strange that the want has not been hitherto supplied by hands more competent than mine. However, if the perusal of this book help to a better understanding of words so frequently on the lips of religious, if it make them value more and more the priceless privilege of joining in the public prayer of the Church, and if it cause them to realise some of the wider doctrines of the spiritual life, then, indeed, the labour of several years will have been well spent and my reward made exceeding great.

But although this book has been written primarily for the use of religious, I have borne in mind the wants of that ever-increasing number of the laity who prefer to find their devotion in the Church's prayers, where all is staid and sober and short, rather than in the utterances of private individuals, which are often the reverse. In days gone by the Little Office in English was the favourite devotion of our Catholic forefathers. Happy for England when our prayers once more take such forms, and we build our spiritual life on the simple direct spirit of Holy Mother Church, instead of on those so-called devotions which the late saintly Cardinal Manning was wont to count as some of the greatest evils of the Church to-day.

As to the book itself. I have divided the treatise into three parts :—

In the THEORETICAL part, I inquire into the nature and excellence of Liturgical Prayer ; and then discuss the materials which compose the Little Office ; lastly, I give an historical account of the growth and development of the Prayer as we have it to-day.

In the PRACTICAL part, I consider the best means of saying the Office with fruit and according to the mind of the Church, and I also make various suggestions to this end, and treat of some difficulties.

The EXEGETICAL part consists of a full and complete Commentary, drawn from the Fathers and great mystical writers, on every verse of the Psalms, together with a full explanation of the hymns, lessons, responsories, antiphons, versicles, and prayers. To this is added by way of *Appendix* a Ceremonial and the latest decrees of the Sacred Congregation of Rites upon the subject.

As to the use to be made of this book. It is not intended to be read through once and then laid aside, as a mere book of reference. But, as the Office is a daily work, so should this treatise be made a daily handbook for reading and *studying* now one part, and then another. I recommend that first of all the book be read through, in order to grasp the general subject. Then that portions of the Third Part be studied daily. On retreat days, the First and Second Parts may be read with advantage. Again, a verse of a Psalm with its commentary may be usefully taken as the subject of mental prayer, and the lights which are gained during the recitation will prove abundant food for this time. And for spiritual reading, slow and thoughtful, what can be better than a commentary on the Psalms ; for here we have the Holy Ghost speaking to us directly in the words of the Scripture ; and His saints explaining them to us. The main point I want to arrive at with those who use this book is the value of the Public Prayer above all private prayer, and the consequent necessity of making a deliberate study thereof.

As regard the materials of this book. I have drawn them from all manner of sources. Whatever is good I have made

use of, according to my lights, irrespective of country and person. One work, largely quoted, is *The Myroure of our Ladye*, written by an unknown author in the old days for the Brigittine nuns of Sion Abbey at Isleworth. This venerable English community after three hundred years' exile on the Continent have returned to England, and are settled at Sion Abbey, Chudleigh, Devon. As their form of Office is entirely different from the Roman use, I had to content myself with extracting from the *Myroure* such parts as would apply to the Little Office to-day. While preserving the pious author's quaint phraseology I have modernised his spelling, and in a few—very few—instances changed, here and there, a word which would not be intelligible to most of my readers. I have invariably quoted from the edition of *The Myroure of our Ladye* published by the Early English Text Society. The Commentary on the Psalms is a *cento* made up from all sources. Like the late Archabbat Wolter of Beuron in his *Psallite Sapienter*, I have used largely that most beautiful and complete work, Dr. Neale's *Commentary on the Psalms* (1860). There are few who have had so intimate a knowledge of the devotional spirit and aspect of the Middle Ages, or were so thoroughly imbued with their tone, as the lamented author. Joining to this an immense patristic and scriptural knowledge, he, with infinite patience, wrote before his death a commentary on the first fifty-eight Psalms, which is all gold. While borrowing largely and freely from this priceless work, I have not hesitated to alter, to abbreviate, and often to enlarge the matter wherever I thought proper. While the Commentary I give is solely devotional, I have pointed out, without being critical, the generally received opinion about the origin of the Psalm and the circumstances under which it was written.

I must express my heartfelt thanks to my valued and well-proved friend, Dom. J. G. Dolan, O.S.B., who in the midst of mission cares has found time to be of great service to me, not only by acting as *Censor Deputatus* for the ecclesiastical authorities, but also by making excellent and thoughtful suggestions, which I have gladly carried out.

It only remains to add my earnest prayer that those holy virgins who, forsaking all things, follow the Lamb whitherso-

ever He goeth, and, by their good works, fill our land with the sweet odour of Christ, thus recalling the days when a Hilda, an Edith, an Ethelreda, a Mildred, a Werburgha, found union with God by doing for Him a woman's work in the world, that they, when using this book, will remember me and mine, alive or dead, in their prayers before the Throne of Grace.

London,
November 5, 1902.

E. L. T.

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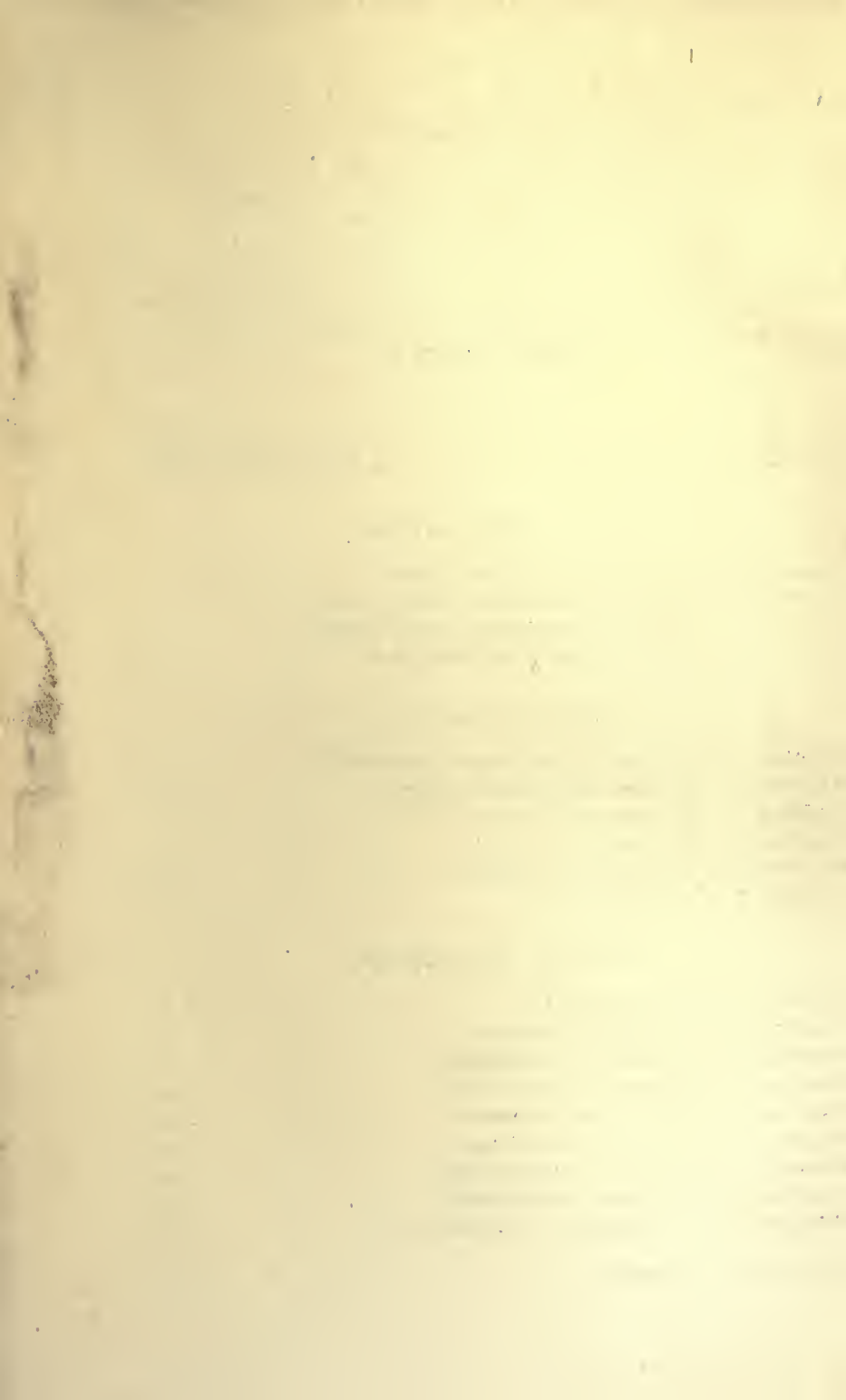
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THE LITTLE OFFICE OF OUR LADY.

PART I.

CHAPTER I.

ON LITURGICAL PRAYER.

THE Little Office of our Lady is one of the liturgical prayers of the Church ; and she imposes it on many of her children. For them it takes the place of that greater office known by the distinctive title of the *Divine Office*. Although the Little Office of our Lady is considerably shorter than the ever-varying Office which the clergy and religious of both sexes in solemn vows have to say, yet, coming as it does from the same authority which regulates and prescribes its use, it is as much a liturgical prayer as the other, and has the same claims to be considered as part of the public official worship which the mystical Spouse of Christ, the Church, daily offers to her Divine Head.

In these last words we have the whole idea of Liturgical Prayer ; and, in order that it should be properly understood, and secure in our heart its true value, we propose to consider, somewhat at length, the nature of prayer, especially in its relation to the recitation of the Office.

We cannot get a better definition of prayer than that found in our catechism, which is the one given by the great Angelical doctor St. Thomas : *Prayer is the lifting up of the*

heart and mind to God. It is, in its simplest form, an act of the soul which calls into play the powers of understanding and will, or, in other words, the reason and the affections. The understanding has to be directed to God; the will has to be moved towards Him. Faith must illuminate our understanding so that we may know Him Whom we address; while Hope and Charity must inflame our will so that we may love, praise, adore, thank, and beseech Him in Whom we believe. There can be no prayer, properly so-called, of the understanding without a resulting motion of the will; neither can there be a prayer of the will without the preliminary exercise of the understanding. Both must be employed; for, as God is One, so is the soul. He has made man to His Own image and likeness. He does not wish us to have a dry knowledge of Himself, but such an understanding as will make us turn to Him as the sole Object that can adequately fill a creature's heart. Again, He does not ask us to love Him blindly, not knowing Who or What He is. He demands a *reasonable service* [1], a love based on knowledge. Without the use of reason we debase His service into a mere superstition. Hence it can be seen, from the definition of prayer, that it is the work of the soul acting through understanding and will. It is well to get this principle deeply rooted in the mind from the outset, for it proves how necessary it is for each one, as far as means allow, to make a conscientious study of the subject of prayer; and especially of the Liturgical Prayer. For those bound to its recitation this must be a serious duty, since the Office is a daily task, laid upon us by Holy Church under a grave obligation.

Prayer is divided into two great classes: mental prayer and vocal prayer. Mental prayer is that in which the soul itself works without the aid of any exterior instrument. Vocal prayer, as its very name implies, calls in the use of the human voice as an external means of praying. But there is this important point to bear in mind. If the soul can pray without the help of the body, the body cannot pray without the help of the soul. Vocal prayer must find an echo in the heart, otherwise it is but an empty form, and merits

the contempt which our Lord shows for the prayers of the Pharisees, who expected to be heard for their much speaking [1]. It would be but a lip-service which He does not want : *These people know me with their lips and not with their hearts*, says the Lord by His prophet [2]. This strict dependence of vocal prayer on mental prayer is in keeping with our human nature. Our bodies can only be said to act in a reasonable manner when prompted by the soul. There is nothing in the nature of things that can prevent the soul from acting, that is to say, from knowing and loving, without making use of the organs of the body : a proof, by the way, making for the immortality of the soul. It is on account of this truth that Holy Church bids us, before beginning our Office, pray that we may say it attentively and devoutly ; that is, with due application of the body and the soul.

Of vocal prayer, which mainly concerns us in this book, the division is two-fold—public and private ; and both have to be considered from the point of view of the prayer itself, and the one who prays. Public vocal prayer, strictly so-called, is that prayer which is the official act of the whole body of the Church. Private vocal prayer is that which individuals, by themselves or with others, say according to their own private devotion. It, therefore, cannot be looked upon as the public act of the whole body of the Church. Now as regards those who pray : the individual may be either a public servant of the Church who in her name is charged with making intercession ; or a private individual [3] who bears no official position, and is not appointed, like Aaron, to stand between the living and the dead [4]. Those who, either by their state or by vow approved of by the Church, are charged with saying the Office, whether it be the Divine Office or the Little Office of our Lady, say it as public servants of the Church who, officially, stand before the Throne of God and make intercession for the whole body of Christ's Church.

[1] Matthew vi. 7.

[2] Isaias xxix. 13.

[3] Though forsaking his own fancies, he may find both his security and profit in following the formulas which are publicly authorised by the Church, and thus unite himself with the public praying of the Church.

[4] Numbers xvi. 48.

When performing this duty, even when alone, they cease to be private individuals : they are invested with the public character of ambassadors to the heavenly court. *He is constituted in those things which appertain to God* [1]. But although invested with a public character, those who recite the Office do not lose the merit of their own personal action according to the words of the Apostle : *Who sows in blessings the same also shall reap in blessings* ; [2] or that other saying : *From the fruit of his mouth shall a man be filled with good things* [3]. And there is no prayer so efficacious as that of the Office, for it has a peculiar and great merit before God for a reason we shall give below. "A single psalm said well excites all the powers of our soul and makes us produce a hundred acts of virtue. One hour said with devotion implies at the bottom of the heart a thousand good desires, a thousand pious affections" [4]: thus St. Alphonsus. Is it any wonder that St. Benedict tells his monks : "Let nothing be preferred to the work of God" ? [5]

But there is a deeper view of the public prayer of the Church and of those who are privileged to take part therein. We must look more closely into the matter and endeavour to *search out honey and oil out of the Rock* [6]. *Now the Rock was Christ* [7] ; and He, *the same yesterday, to-day and for evermore* [8], is the soul of the Liturgical prayer. It is Jesus Christ Who prays in us ; it is He Who prays by us ; it is He Who prays with us. This is the great truth which gives the value to Liturgical prayer and sets it so far above any private devotions. It is this sublime truth which makes St. Alphonsus say that one *Pater Noster* said in the Office is worth a thousand said out of private devotion.

We must go back to our baptismal Creed for the foundation of all this. We profess our belief in the Almighty Father, in the Incarnate Son, and the Holy Ghost ; and then in the mystical Body of Christ, quickened by the Abiding Presence, the Holy Catholic Church, which is the *Communi-*

[1] Heb. v. 1.

[2] 2 Cor. ix. 6.

[3] Prov. xiii. 2.

[4] The Divine Office. Introduction. [8] Heb. xiii. 8.

[5] Holy Rule, Cap. 43.

[6] Deut. xxii. 13.

[7] 1 Cor. x. 4.

nion of Saints. This is the doctrine of the Mystical Body which the Holy Ghost by St. Paul thus explains :—

For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one Body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink of one Spirit. . . . Now ye are the Body of Christ and members in particular [1].

And again :—

For there is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all. . . . (That) speaking the truth in love (we) may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head, even Christ, from whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love [2].

And once more :—

And He is before all things and in Him all things consist. And He is the Head of the Body, the Church. . . . for it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell [3].

On these words of the Apostle the whole structure of the Liturgical prayer is built. It is the outward manifestation of the real life of the Church, the mystical Body of God the Son. And in this way our Divine Lord has united to Himself, as members of a body to the head, all those who live by grace. This forms what is called the Mystical Body of Christ. As He has a real human body *born of the Virgin Mary* so He has also a Mystical Body begotten by grace *born of the Water and the Blood* [4] and quickened at Pentecost by the coming of the Holy Ghost, *the Lord and Life-giver*. Those who are members of His Body live with His life and act through with Him according to the saying : *I live; no longer I but Christ lives in me* [5]; and that other : *Of His fulness we all have received* [6]. When this Mystical Body acts it is always in union with its Divine Head, Jesus

[1] Cor. xii. 12, 13, 27.

[2] Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6, 15, 16.

[3] Col. i. 17, 18.

[4] 1 John v. 6.

[5] Gal. ii. 20.

[6] John i. 16.

Christ. Its acts become His acts, for they are guided by His Spirit. They are thus invested with a dignity and a worth far beyond their natural power. They become the acts of the Infinite God Himself. On the other hand, when Jesus Christ works He acts as the Head of the Church, of that Mystical body which He has united so closely to Himself and which only exists in Him. He makes use of the Body Mystical for carrying out His Own gracious ends; and plays on it as a skilful harper who touches the strings of a well-tuned instrument and is sure that they will respond to the feelings which sweep over his soul.

What, then, is the work of Jesus Christ as the Head of the Church? He is the great Adorer of His Father, or, as the saintly founder of St. Sulpice was wont to say, the Sole Religious [1]. Through the Incarnation, God is able to receive from Creation a homage and a worship which perfectly befit Him, and which otherwise could never have been found. Finite creatures, be they the holiest and highest, can never worship God as He deserves; for to Him is due a worship without bounds. How, then, can creatures, who are limited on all sides, pay such a homage? No one but God Himself, the Infinite One, can offer a worship which has the perfection that is required. It was therefore necessary, if He is to have a fitting worship, that God the Son, of the very same substance and equal to His Father in all things, should become Man, so that as the God-Man He, in His created nature, and in the name of all creation, should pay a homage which, on account of His Own Divine Person, is infinite and worthy of all acceptance by the Eternal Father. But while on the one hand God receives from Jesus Christ a worship without ending, according to the words: *Great is the Lord and exceedingly to be praised* [2]; on the other, the life of the God-Man is also destined for us, to supply the wants of our race. He is decreed to be our Head in order to enable us through Him to worship our Maker. Not only during the thirty-three years of His mortal life was He to worship His Father, but

[1] Religion in its real meaning is that bond which binds the creature to the Creator (*Religo*—I bind).

[2] Ps. xlvii. 1.

that homage has to be paid for evermore. The life of Jesus now in Heaven is concerned with the same work : *Living for ever to make intercession for us* [1]. He is the *Lamb slain from the beginning of the world* [2] ; the Eternal Sacrifice to which we are associated. The Mystical Body ever needs to pour forth its homage to the Eternal ; and Jesus Christ, her Divine Head, is ever making intercession for us in Her name. *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the Righteous* [3]. This position of our Lord, as the Mystical Head of the Church, the Adorer of the Father in the name of His brethren, must be understood if we are to appreciate the Liturgical prayer at its proper value, and to understand our share therein. Let us, then, with the eye of faith, penetrate within the veil and, with adoring look, gaze on the worship of heaven. Let us enter *into His courts with praise* [4] and listen to the *morning stars singing together* and the *Sons of God shouting for joy* [5]. The Beloved disciple, St. John, shall be our guide.

And after this I looked and behold a door was opened in heaven ; and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me ; which said : Come up hither and I will show thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit : and, behold, a Throne was set in heaven and One sat on the Throne. And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone ; and there was a rainbow round about the Throne, in sight like unto an emerald.

And round about the Throne were four and twenty seats ; and sitting upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders, sitting clothed in white raiment ; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

And out of the Throne proceeded lightnings and thunderings and voices : and there were seven lamps of fire burning before the Throne which are the seven Spirits of God.

And before the Throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal : and in the midst of the Throne, and round about the Throne, were four living creatures, full of eyes, before and behind.

[1] Heb. vii. 25.

[2] Apoc. xiii. 8.

[3] John ii. 1.

[4] Ps. c. 4.

[5] Job xxxviii. 7.

And the first living creature was like a lion, and the second living creature like a calf, and the third living creature had a face as a man, and the fourth living creature was like a flying-eagle.

And the four living creatures had each of them six wings about him : and they were full of eyes within : and they rest not day or night, saying : Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is, and is to come.

And when those living creatures gave glory and honour and thanks to Him that sat on the Throne, Who liveth for ever and ever, the four and twenty elders fell down before Him that sat on the Throne, and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the Throne, saying : Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power : for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they were and are created. [1].

And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the Throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, a Lamb standing as if it were slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And He came and took the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the Throne.

And when He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a New Song : Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof : for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy Blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation ; and hast made us unto God kings and priests : and we shall reign on the earth.

And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the Throne and the living creatures and the elders : and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands ; saying, with a loud voice : Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

And every creature which is in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever: and the four living creatures said: Amen. And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped Him that liveth for ever and ever [1].

And the four and twenty elders who sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying: We give Thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, Who art, and wast, and art to come, because Thou hast taken to Thee Thy great power, and hast reigned.

And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was seen in His temple the ark of His testimony: and there were lightning, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail. And there appeared a great sign in heaven: a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars [2].

And I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred and forty and four thousand, having His Father's name written in their foreheads. And I heard a Voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sang as it were a New Song before the Throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders: And no man could learn that Song but the hundred and forty and four thousand who were redeemed from the earth. These were they who were not defiled with women for they are virgins. These are they who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb; and in their mouth was found no guile, for they are without blemish before the Throne of God [3].

And after that I looked, and, behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened. . . And the temple was filled with smoke from the Glory of God, and from His power [4].

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in

[1] Apoc. v. 6-14.

[2] Apoc. xi. 16-19; xii. 1.

[3] Apoc. xiv. 1-5.

[4] Apoc. xv. 5, 8.

heaven, saying: Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. . . And the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God that sat on the Throne, saying: Amen; Alleluia. And a Voice came out of the Throne saying: Praise our God, all ye His servants, and ye that fear Him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord our God the Almighty reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give glory to Him: for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and His Spouse hath made herself ready [1].

And I heard a great Voice out of heaven saying, Behold the tabernacle of God with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and shall be their God.

And He that sat upon the Throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And He said unto me: Write: for these words are true and faithful. And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End [2].

In this picture of the worship of heaven, which fills our heart with a reverential awe, we have all the elements of the Liturgical prayer. He Who sits upon the Throne is the object of all worship; the mystic living creatures are continually pouring forth their adoration; the elders are for ever casting in abasement their crowns before the Throne; the glorious angelic host in their varied choirs, each a very world of beauty, of intelligence and love, join in the mighty song of praise; the one Voice from all creation, animate and inanimate, is always giving expression of their love and worship to their Maker, harping as harpers on the mystical harp of the Heart of the Lamb, Who has redeemed them to God and is in their midst as the Leader and Director of all the adoration, and the Voice Himself which comes from the Throne, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. For it is deep down in the Heart of the Lamb that are found all the prayers of the Saints. He first conceives them as the expression of His own worship to the Father, and then instills them into our souls; thus causing us to have *the same mind that is in*

[1] Apoc. xix. 1, 4-7.

[2] Apoc. xxi. 3, 5, 6.

Himself [1]. He is the eternal Praise and the Glory of His Father. It is through Him alone that we have access to the Throne of Mercy [2].

Thus the public prayer of the Church is nothing else but the prayer which the Divine Head of the Church is ever pouring forth on our behalf to His Eternal Father. Sharing as we do in His life, forming but one body with Him, He makes use of our souls as so many instruments by which He can praise God. The words we utter are His in very truth ; it is He Who prays in us and by us, if we place ourselves wholly at His disposal. . Hence no exaggeration can be found in the words we say when we remember it is He Who is saying them, and that on His lips they are perfectly exact and true. But if we are His instruments, we are reasonable ones. To refer to a former simile, we are not like a mute harp which is responsive only when the musician touches it, but we are like a harp of living strings—of strings which willingly place themselves under the master's power and share in his sentiment as far as possible. We have to love God with our whole soul, with our affections, and with our reason ; and so we must know what is our part in the Divine worship the Head of the Church is always pouring forth, and what part is His. Our part is a deliberate purpose of praising God in union with Jesus Christ, and it is all summed up in these glorious words said in the Mass just before the *Pater Noster* : "*In Him and with Him and by Him, is all honour and glory to Thee, God, Father Almighty, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, through the ages of ages.*"

M. Olier has tried to bring out this great truth by means of a seal made from the designs of the French artist Lebrun. The upper part represents Heaven and the Holy Ghost, the source of all homage and of every blessing of which God is the object here below. Beneath, appears David with his heart enlightened, and transported by the light of the Holy Ghost. In him we recognise the face of his son, Jesus Christ, upon Whom the Holy Ghost reposes with all fulness, and Whose every aim is directed to the glory of the Divine Majesty. The harp the King holds in his hand, and which bears the

[1] Phil. ii. 5.

[2] Eph. ii. 18.

words : *Magnificate Dominum mecum* ("Praise the Lord with me"), represents the soul of Our Lord, Who, by a never-ending love toward His Father, desires that every word of His should be repeated by all His brethren.

Around David, but a little lower down, are priests clad in their choral dress, kneeling, with eyes raised heavenwards ; they also carry harps, upon which is inscribed the second half of the verse, *Exaltemus nomen ejus in idipsum* ("Let us exalt His name in the selfsame"). These represent the ministers of the Church and others charged with praising God in the name of their brethren ; they unite themselves to Our Lord's Spirit and join in His tribute of praise. They wear the surplice, to show the purity required in those whom Our Lord deigns to use as His instruments. They are on their knees, to show that they ought to live in the spirit of worship. Their eyes are cast to heaven, and on their harps are the words *In idipsum* ("in the selfsame"), because their sole desire should be to praise God in and through Jesus. On the lowest part of the seal are the words of the Apocalypse : *I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, as of harpers harping on their harps*. It was a *voice*, not *voices* that were heard. Only one Voice goes up before the Throne of God, only one worship does God attend to. It is the Voice of Jesus which is *heard for His reverence* [1]. "He alone," says M. Olier, "has the right to intone the Song of Zion, and to bid us, His children, join therein."

This, then, is the life of our Blessed Lord in heaven. As our Head He gives to His Father and to our Father, to His God and to our God [2], the worship we ourselves are not able to give. "As in each man the head speaks, sees, and thinks for the whole man, and thus makes up for the weakness of the rest of the body, so does Jesus Christ supply for the defects of the body of the faithful, the bulk of Christians, who of themselves are blind, insensible, and dumb. He lays before God the wants of the entire body. He speaks for it, sees, and hears for it—in a word, being its Head, He does everything for it" [3].

To quote M. Olier, and applying his words to the public

[1] Heb. v. 7

[2] John xxi. 1.

[3] Bacquez : The Divine Office, p. 283.

prayer of the Church : "This is what Jesus Christ does invisibly in heaven. This is what His ministers are called to do in a visible manner here below ; or, rather, what our Lord does unceasingly through them on earth. To this end He places in their hands the Office, the expression of His sentiments, and of the duty of His members toward the Father ; and whilst, as Head and High Priest, He communicates His Spirit to enable them to perform it, His Church puts them under the obligation of reciting it in His name. Thus the priest, the representative of our Lord, is at the same time the living symbol of the unity of the members of the Body Mystical. The Church, represented in him, addresses herself by Jesus Christ to the Eternal Father, and, by the power of the Holy Ghost, our Lord gives life to the prayers of the Church and makes them worthy of God, even as in the Mass He uses His priest to consecrate the mystery of His Body and Blood and offer them as a victim meet for the divine regard."

This intimate union which exists between the Head and the members of the Body Mystical, and which makes us, as St. Paul says, *One body and one spirit* [1], is the fulfilment of our Lord's promise made the night before He suffered : *In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you* [2]. And : *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe in Me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee : they may also be one in us* [3]. Not only was it His parting wish, but it was the subject of His last discourse : *Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches* [4].

This, then, is our position when, in the name of the Church, we take up our Office book and say our hours. As the Apostle says : *We put on the Lord Jesus Christ* [5]. We become His mouthpiece, and give voice to the feelings of adoration, thanksgiving, supplication, and atonement which

[1] Eph. iv. 4.

[2] John xiv. 20.

[3] *Ibid.* xvii. 20, 21.[4] *Ibid.* xv. 4, 5.

[5] Rom. xiii. 14.

are for ever welling up from the Sacred Heart as Jesus lifts up His five wounds before the Father and intercedes for us. We give voice to that *great cry* which, amidst the toil and bustle of the day, and in the stillness and solitude of the night, is ever ascending from that same Sacred Heart in the countless tabernacles where in sacramental life Jesus abides in our midst. His prayer is ours; ours is His. *Thou art my praise* [1], says the Prophet. *Christ is our life* [2], says the Apostle. Not only does He pray for us as our High Priest, but He also prays in us, as our Head; and, filling us with His feelings, He joins our hearts to the homage He pays His Father. As the flame consumes every thread of wick in the same light and fire, so does our Lord's Spirit spread throughout the Church, enlightening each soul with the splendour of the one faith, and consuming it with the ardour of the one charity. *He maketh His ministers a flaming fire* [3]. This is why the Church always ends our prayers with the words, "Through Christ our Lord"—to unite us with Him Who prays in us, and to remind us of His promise that anything we ask the Father in His name shall be presently granted to us [4].

An important result follows from the consideration of the doctrine of the Mystical Body. It is one that fills us with great consolation. As long as we keep our mind and heart lifted up to God—that is to say, as long as we keep ourselves, as it were, basking in the sunshine of His presence—the weaknesses of human nature, such as distractions, cannot harm us or take away from the value of our prayer. Our Lord continues to use us as His instruments until we, by a deliberate act of our will, break off the union and, of set purpose, withdraw ourselves from His influence.

That great Benedictine soul, St. Gertrude, being once, in spite of all efforts, more than ordinarily distracted, lost heart, and began to be much troubled. Our Divine Master vouchsafed to appear to His servant and consoled her by saying: *Daughter, behold My Heart; for the future look to it and supply your defects. When you would pray, ask it to help you*

[1] Jeremiah xvii. 14.

[2] Col. iii. 3.

[3] Ps. ciii. 4.

[4] John xv. 16.

to give to My Father the worship you owe. I shall ever be ready to second you as soon as you call Me to your aid. St. Bernard learned the same lesson. "*David rejoiced of old to have found his heart to pray to his Master and to his God* [1]. "And I have found the Heart of the King, of the Brother, and Friend, of the loving Jesus. And therefore shall I not adore? Yea, I will pray. For His Heart is with me, yea, boldly will I say it, for my Head is Christ" [2].

"The Spirit of our Lord," says M. Olier, "is like a river that flows into the vast bosom of the Eternal, and in the rapidity of its course carries along everything it meets with. It is enough that by our will we give ourselves to Him, and are sensitive under His touch. He will then carry us along with Himself into the abyss of the Divinity, there to be absorbed for ever."

To sum up, then, the Liturgical Prayer, such as we have it in the Office, and is laid upon us by the Church, is no private devotion, but it is the Prayer which the Word Incarnate is ever pouring forth on behalf of the Mystical Body of which He is the Head. Those who say it are the willing instruments placed at His disposal by His Spouse, the Church. We abide in Him and He in us. The words we speak, we speak not of ourselves, but in His Person. In the Liturgical Prayer we have the most perfect means of adoring, and thanking God, and of making supplication, atonement, that the Eternal Wisdom could provide. By Jesus Christ, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, *the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name* [3]. From this point of view there is nothing to be added to make us esteem and love our Office. No one who knows what it is can hesitate in putting it far above any private devotion; for nothing can compare with it, save and except the Mass, with which it is so closely connected that one cannot be understood without the other [4]. Therefore, to spend time over our

[1] 2 Kings vii. 27.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. 184, p. 642.

[3] Heb. xiii. 15.

[4] The Sacrifice of Prayer to be perfect must never be separated in thought from the great Eucharistic Sacrifice of the New Law. The Office and the Mass form but one whole, and one can understand the Office only when it is studied in the light of

Office, to taste more and more of its sweetness, to find in it food for our souls, to form all our spiritual life on it, to get the matter for our mental prayer from it, to make its phrases those with which we habitually approach the Throne of Mercy, to make it regulate our whole life, even if, for this purpose, we have to abandon our self-willed and private devotions, which, valuable in themselves for others, are perhaps not fitted for us, into whose hands the Church puts the Office book as her public servants ; to do all this is surely the highest wisdom.

the Altar ; for it is the setting of rich gold which surrounds and sets forth the priceless jewel of the Mass. When we consider that the Prayer of our Lord, like His Sacrifice, has the same four ends, viz., adoration, thanksgiving, supplication, and atonement, we can immediately see that the Mass must be steadily kept in view in any study of the Office we may undertake. The whole Office must, therefore, always be referred to the Mass either as preparation or thanksgiving, both for priests who have to say it, and for others who take part in the offering by their presence.

CHAPTER II.

THE FORMATION OF THE LITURGICAL PRAYER.

As my intention in writing this book is, above all, to be practical, and to give what help I can for understanding the Office, I must now treat of the formation of the Liturgical prayer, and discuss the materials which the Church uses. A knowledge of these points is of capital importance for all who wish to enter intelligently into the mind of the Church, and to use rightly the great privilege of being her representatives. The more we know about the Church and her ways, the more shall we value everything she sets her seal upon. *Psallite sapienter* ("Sing ye wisely"), says the Psalmist [1]; and wisdom is knowing.

Our Divine Master Himself has given us the form upon which all public prayer must be based. The *Pater Noster* is the simplest and most perfect expression of the relations between a creature and the Maker. *Thus shall ye pray* [2] said He in answer to the disciples' petition *Lord teach us how to pray* [3]. The Divine Wisdom having deigned to show us what manner of petition becomes us and is pleasing in His sight, it follows that every other prayer, to be profitable, must be laid on the lines of the Lord's Prayer; for, as St. Augustine says: If we pray rightly and fittingly, then, whatever words we may use, we offer no petition but those that are found in this prayer of our Lord's. The Office, then, is only the *Pater Noster* carried out into detail, expanded and commented upon.

From the earliest ages of the Church Christians were accustomed to meet together for religious exercises. Naturally

[1] Psalm xlvii. 7.

[2] Matt. vi. 9.

[3] *Ibid.*

they would take what was at hand and add to it certain features of their own. It is certain that the form of worship which prevailed in the synagogues (in contra-distinction to that observed in the Temple) and in which the earliest Christians were wont to join [1], consisted mainly of singing psalms, reading Holy Scripture, exhortation, and common prayer. These features the Christians retained what time they separated from, or were driven out of, the synagogues. To this liturgical form of prayer they joined, on the Lord's Day at least, the Eucharistic Sacrifice of the New Law, and grouped their vocal prayer around this central act of worship. At early dawn and at eventide they assembled to sing praise to God. Pliny the Younger, writing [2] to Trajan, says of the Christians in his province of Bythnia, that they were a law-abiding folk, and did no harm; their only peculiarity being to meet early in the morning of the first day of the week and sing hymns to Christ as to a God. Thus Lauds, the song of praise at day-break, and Vespers, the even-song, are the two original Offices of the Church. These two hours were to consecrate to God the whole day, the beginning and the end: *And the evening and the morning were the first day* [3]. David had said, *To Thee do I watch at break of day* [4]; and *Let my prayer ascend to Thee, O Lord, like incense in Thy sight, and the lifting up of my hands as an evening sacrifice* [5]. In the service of the Temple, too, there were the morning and the evening sacrifices; and so it was natural that at those two hours the *sacrifice of lips praising His name* [6] should be also offered. As time went on and Christians became more numerous, when the custom arose of keeping festivals at the tombs of martyrs on their anniversary, the pious lay-folk and the religious of that time used, out of private devotion, to keep vigil at the sacred spot; and, by singing psalms and reading the Scriptures, pass the time until the bishop and his clergy arrived at dawn for the Lauds and subsequent sacrifice. These Vigils, which were in the beginning entirely voluntary and the spontaneous action of the laity and religious, were

[1] Acts ii. 42, 46; iii. 1; xv. 21.

[2] Book x., n. 97.

[3] Gen. i. 5.

[4] Ps. lxii. 1.

[5] Ps. cxli. 2.

[6] Heb. xiii. 15.

soon taken up by the Church and regulated ; while preserving their popular form of psalm and spiritual reading with singing of responsories, she turned this private and voluntary prayer into an official act of her clergy. Hence the Matin service, which to this day shows its origin by its close connection with Lauds. When the monastic system developed in the Church, the monks added, for their own private devotion, Prime, as a prayer before the day's work began ; and prayer at the Third hour, in remembrance of the descent of the Holy Ghost at that time ; prayer at the Sixth and Ninth hours in remembrance of the custom of the Apostles to pray at these times ; *Now Peter went to pray about the Sixth hour* [1] ; and—*Now Peter and John went up together into the Temple at the hour of prayer ; being the Ninth hour* [2]. The Holy Father Benedict in the Rule, which has been the guide for so many millions of souls, and has perhaps done more to form the mind of the Church than any other book save the Bible, instituted the hour of Compline as the night prayer for his monks. Thus was the cycle of prayer completed ; and what was the private devotion of monks became in due time part and parcel of the Church's public prayer. The historical order then was : Lauds and Vespers ; Vigils or Matins, Prime ; Terce, Sext, and None ; then Compline [3].

[1] Acts x. 9.

[2] Acts iii. 1.

[3] The public prayer in old Anglo-Saxon days in England is thus described by the learned Dr. Rook :—

“ Like the rest of Christendom, then, seven times within the day did each church bell ring and bid its clerks—from the sub-deacon upwards—to come thither and sing God's praises, morning, noon, night ; and the parish priest who forgot either of these duties was liable to be punished by a fine. Amongst those most conspicuous for their learning or high position in the Church at that period, such men as Beda, Ecgberht, and Ælfric, we find telling this country, each in his own time, of this ritual usage and how it ought to be followed. Beda's notice of the “ hours ” in general, or of some particular part in them, is curious ; while the archbishop of York, and the abbat who was afterwards called to the primatial chair of Canterbury, both lay down the canon law upon this matter. So thoroughly do these prelates' opinions agree, that Ecgberht's Latin ordinance seems to have been put into Anglo-Saxon by Ælfric, who says :—‘ Seven canonical hours they (the first four general Councils) appointed for us to sing daily to the praise of our Lord ; as the Prophet David said in his prophecy, *Septies in die*, &c. *Seven times, my Lord*, said he, *I have said my praise in one day, for the righteousness of Thy judgments.*’ The first canonical hour is uht-song

Counting Lauds, with the preparatory vigils as one, we have seven hours of prayer; "seven visits to the heavenly Court," as the saintly Cardinal Manning said in his "Eternal Priesthood" [1] Why was this number chosen? It was not of fixed purpose from the beginning; but having so developed, many reasons could be given why the number should not be exceeded. Seven is a very mysterious figure, and seems to represent God's dealings with mankind. Did He not make the world in six days and rest on the seventh? Are there not seven gifts of the Holy Ghost; seven sacraments; seven spirits standing before the throne of God [2]; seven deadly sins; seven virtues, theological and cardinal; seven petitions of the Pater Noster; seven ages of man, all to be sanctified with prayer; seven scenes in our Lord's passion; seven sorrows of Blessed Mary our Lady? Did not David say, praise God seven times a day? [3] and did not Elias pray seven times before the heavens opened and rain fell on the drought-stricken earth? [4] and does not even a just man fall seven times a day [5]? There are many other like reasons why the Church cherishes the mystical number of seven and regulates her prayers thereby [6].

(or matins), with the after-song (lauds) thereunto belonging. Prime-song, undern (terce) song; mid-day (sext) song; none-song, even-song, night-song (compline). These seven canonical hours ye should sing with great attention to the praise of your Lord, daily in church, always at the hour appointed, and in like manner celebrate Mass at the appointed time." *Church of our Father*, vol. iii., p. 2.

[1] p. 62.

[4] 2 Kings xviii. 43.

[2] Apoc. viii. 2.

[5] Prov. xxiv. 16.

[3] Ps. cxviii. 164.

[6] Christian ingenuity has loved to occupy itself with finding out in the mysterious science of numbers something that recalls God and the spiritual life. Thus:—*One* (represents) the Unity of the Godhead; *two*, the two natures of our Lord; *three*, the ever-blessed Trinity; *four*, the four evangelists (hence the preaching of the Gospel); *five*, on the one hand, a full knowledge of Christian mysteries (the doctrine of the Trinity, that of our Lord's two natures), on the other, the state of ordinary sinners, who break and observe half the law (compare the five brethren of Dives); (*also naturally the five wounds*); *six*, the Passion, from our Lord's being crucified in the sixth hour of the sixth day; also, temptation, from the peculiar reference to that contained in the sixth day of the Creation; *seven*, the sevenfold graces of the Holy Ghost, and later, the seven Sacraments (*and seven sorrows of our Lady*); *eight*, regeneration, as being the first number that oversteps seven, the symbol of the old creation; *nine*, the angelic choir; *ten*, the Law; *eleven*, iniquity as transgressing the Law. And not only were simple numbers thus explained;

And this seven-fold praise of God through our Lady is particularly suitable. The pious author of the "Myroure of Our Ladye" applies them in this manner: "Now in case ye think that these are good causes why God should be served in these hours, but since all your service is of our Lady ye would wit (know) why her service should be said in these same hours. And as to this ye ought to think that it is full convenient (that) her holy service should be said in time according to His, for her will was never contrary to His blessed will. And furthermore some say that for at matin time there appeareth a star in the firmament whereby shipmen are ruled in the sea and bring themselves to (a) right haven, and for our merciful Lady is that star that succoureth mankind in the troublous sea of this world and bringeth her lovers to the haven of health; therefore it is worthy that she should be served and praised at matin time. At prime time there appeareth a star before the sun, as if it were the leader or bringer-forth of the sun, and our Lady came before and brought forth to mankind that Son of Righteousness that is our Lord Jesus Christ. At (the) hour of terce labourers desire to have their dinner, and our Lady hath brought forth to us Him that is the Food and Bread of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, comfort and refection to all that labour in His service. At (the) hour of sext the sun waxeth more hot; and by means of our Lady the everlasting Son hath showed the heat of His charity more largely to mankind. At (the) hour of none the sun is highest; and the highest grace and mercy that ever was done to man on earth was brought in by means of our Lady. At evensong

compound numbers yielded a composite sense. *Twelve* was the Faith preached throughout the world—the doctrine of the Three dispersed into four quarters (*by the twelve Apostles*); *forty* or *eighty-eight*, the struggle of the regenerate with the old nature; five into eight, or eleven into eight; *sixty-six*, the extreme of wickedness; six, in the sense of temptation, into eleven (and compare this with the number of the Beast in the *Apocalypse* xiii. 18, the quintessence of all temptation). And even still more remarkably were numbers compounded; as in the 153 fishes, which in so many sermons (Migne, P. L., vol. xxxviii., p. 1170) St. Augustine always explains in the same way of the whole congregation of the elect. Seven stands for the Spirit, ten for the Law, seventeen is therefore the fulfilment of the Law by the works of the Spirit: sum the progression, $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 . . . 16 + 17$ and you get 153. Cf. *Neale's Commentary on the Psalms* (ed. 1860), vol. 1, pp. 390-1.

time the day faileth much ; and when all other succour faileth our Lady's grace helpeth. Complaine is the end of the day ; and in (the) end of our life we have most need of our Lady's help, and therefore in all these hours we ought to do her worship and praising" [1].

The chief and oldest part of the Office consists of the Psalter, or book of Psalms ; and, in the mind of the Church, the whole one hundred and fifty should be gone through once a week. It is on this portion of the Office we shall chiefly spend our time. The Author of the Book of Psalms is the Holy Ghost, who made use of David, the royal singer, and of others, to write the collection which has come down to us under the general title of the Psalms of David [2].

They have ever been the favourite formula of prayer for both the Jewish and the Christian Churches, and are our most cherished heritage. Says St. John Chrysostom : "If we keep vigil in the Church, David comes first, last and midst. If early in the morning we seek for the melody of hymns, first, last, and midst is David again. If we are occupied with the funeral solemnities of the departed, if virgins sit at home and spin, David is first, last, and midst. O, marvellous wonder ! Many who have made but little progress in literature, nay, who have scarcely mastered its first principles, have the Psalter by heart. Nor is it in cities and churches alone that at all times, through every age, David is illustrious. In the midst of the forum, in the wilderness and uninhabitable land, he excites the praises of God. In monast ries, amongst those holy choirs of angelic armies, David is first, last, and midst. In the convent of virgins where are the bands of them that imitate Mary ; in the deserts where are men crucified to this world, and having their conversation with God, first, midst, and last is he. All other men are at night overpowered by natural sleep. David alone is active, and congregating the servants of God into seraphic bands, turns earth into heaven and converts men into angels."

[1] pp. 14-15.

[2] It is admitted by all now-a-days that David is not the author of the whole collection. The first fifty and most likely others are credited to him. Solomon and Esdras are among the other authors.

Let us try and get an exact idea of the purpose of the Psalms, and then we shall be able to deduce certain principles of interpretation which will be of use to us hereafter. Whose voice do we hear in the Psalms? It is a three-fold voice. David, or the other authors; Jesus Christ in His own person; and our Lord speaking in the person of His creatures. The first voice is clear, and, generally speaking, can be recognised easily. But David spoke in prophecy; and he himself was the type of Him who deigned to be called the *Son of David*. So the literal and first meaning which applies to David only finds its full significance in our Lord, Who is the real speaker in the Psalm. St. Augustine says: "Let us commend oftener and oftener, and it does not weary us to repeat what is useful to you to know, that it is our Lord Jesus Christ Who frequently speaks in His Own Person as our Head: often in the person of His Body which is ourselves and His Church; yet as that the words seem to come from the mouth of but one man, we may understand that the Head and the Body are integrally one and cannot be separated: as that union of which it is said: *They shall be in one flesh* [1]. If therefore we acknowledge Him in one flesh let us acknowledge Him in the one voice" [2].

"Thus do we explain," says the learned Sulpician, M. Bacquez, "what the holy doctors teach: the Psalms are full of Jesus Christ; they are His instrument, His voice, His language, they are the language of the members as well as of the Head. It is a single, yet at the same time a manifold, Voice in which are expressed and mingled all the blessings of heaven and earth, all the yearnings of love, all the tones of gratitude, all the prayers of the needy. In this way can we also understand what our Lord says so clearly, that He is the object of the Psalms, and that they speak of Him [3]. This also explains why He makes such frequent use of them, particularly on the Cross, and applies their words to Himself [4]. . . . Thus we see the aim, the object, the Divine reason of the Psalms. We hold the key to them, and bear in hand

[1] Gen. ii. 25.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. xxxvi., p. 453.

[3] *Which were written in the Psalms concerning me* (Luke xxiv. 44).

[4] Matt. xxvii. 46; Luke xxiii. 46; John xv. 25.

the torch that sheds light upon all their difficulties. We know now how to search out their depths, measure their breadth, and comprehend their variety, harmony, and general meaning. It is always Jesus Christ, the Mediator, the great High Priest, the only worthy Adorer of His Father Who stands before the Throne. It is always He Who prays, He Who speaks through us. As the sweet Psalmist of Israel said : *The spirit of the Lord spake by me and His Word was through my tongue* [1]. Sometimes it is in His own name exclusively as the only Son of God ; on these occasions His words taken literally apply to Him alone, and His members can only appropriate them so far as their union with their Head makes them sharers in His greatness and destiny. Thus He Himself explains His eternal generation, His birth in time, His priesthood, His kingdom and His different mysteries. More frequently He speaks in the name of the Church and of all her children, as the Head of the Body whose members are ever undergoing the vicissitudes of their mortal life. *The voice of His words like the voice of a multitude* [2]. Then His thoughts expand and generalise as His language approaches ours. Sometimes He seems to be referring to one nation only, or limiting His words to some special circumstance or event. But in truth His thought goes beyond His words. What seems the object is only an image, a symbol or a type of the widest significance. Israel means all God's faithful people ; Jerusalem, seated on a mountain and set upon a rock, means the Church ; Sion, where the tabernacle was, the holy of holies, is Heaven, the eternal sanctuary wherein the Lord dwells and is ready to listen to our prayers [3]. He echoes every feeling and prayer and places Himself in every possible relation. One moment He humbles Himself before the Majesty of the Father, and groans in sorrow bewailing our sins, and beseeches pardon and forgiveness. He is the World's Penitent, bearing the weight of our sins, and His mighty Heart is broken for our repentance. Then, at the

[1] 2 Kings xxiii. 2

[2] Daniel x. 6.

[3] The generality of mystical writers takes those two, however, in the opposite sense ; Jerusalem, the "vision of peace," meaning heaven ; and Sion, the fortified rock, the Church Militant.

thought of the goodness of God Whose mercy is without end, He breaks forth into cries of joy and gratitude. Never weary of thanksgiving, He calls upon all to rejoice with Him. Then, mindful of our weakness, seeing our poverty and knowing our needs and dangers, He implores help from above, beseeching His Father to listen to His cry. *For there is none other to fight for us, save only Thou, O Lord* [1]. Every Psalm is a picture of the Soul of Jesus in Himself, and in His Mystical Body. As M. Olier says, the Divine Word hidden in the Church (which He has taken for His Spouse in order to further His design and help Him to praise God) expresses through her the beauty of God which she bears within herself. He clothes Himself with her to praise God more tenderly ; and she clothes herself with Him in order to praise Him truly ; so that the Word and the Church are one single praise of God, and the Word and the Church are like a voice repeated by as many echoes as there are saints. It is a wonderful Word and a marvellous Praise ; a Harmony and a Voice beyond understanding. Oh, that I may be lost in lost in thee, O Divine Word ! " [2]

This exalted view of the Psalms sets them far above every other formula of prayer, and explains why for so many thousand years God's people have found in them the food of their souls. Says an old writer : " If you are sad the Psalmist weeps with you ; if you are joyful he gives your joy wings that lift you up to heaven ? Do you mourn ? he is ready to comfort you. Are you depressed, betrayed, forsaken, or ill treated ? he is by your side ever ready to meet your want." And is this any wonder when we remember they are the words, the expression of the Sacred Heart, of Him Who was acquainted with sorrow, and like to us in all things except sin ?

There is another principle in reference to the Psalms to be drawn from the doctrine of the Mystical Body, viz., that if the words are absolutely true of our Lord they can also, in measure, be referred to us who are His members. In measure, I have said. For in proportion as we approach to Him and

[1] *Ant. pro Pace.*

[2] *The Divine Office*, pp. 106-108.

the more we are likened to Him in all things, the clearer will be the application of the Psalms to us and the nearer shall we be to having the same mind that was in Christ. Following out this thought and bearing in mind these other words :—*For whom He foreknew He hath predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son* [1]—we may ask who, out of all creation, has been predestinated to a higher union with Him, and who bears the closest resemblance to Jesus? Surely, it is She who bore Him, who nursed and tended Him, who cared for Him during all His mortal life, who kept all His words in her heart, who stood by His Cross, and was the object of His last love and care. Mary, our blissful Mother and most gracious Lady, is the example of what a creature can become by grace. She, as the *Mirror of Justice*, shows to what a perfection a creature can attain, and how far he can become an image of the Word made flesh. If Jesus bears in His human form her likeness, so that He can be recognised as the Son of Mary, His mother bears His mark as being the chief work of the Author of Grace, His very masterpiece. She is *the great Sign appearing in the heavens—a Woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars* [2]; the wonder of all God's creatures, who marvel that anyone can be raised so high, that anyone can be so great and glorious, and yet remain what they are themselves, a mere nothing in comparison with her Maker. To Mary, then, we can make such application of the Psalms as can be referred to the highest of all creatures; and what is true of the Mystical Body of Christ will be especially and more appropriately true of her who is described as the Neck which joins the Body on to the Head—or, as Wordsworth says, "Our tainted nature's solitary boast."

It must be remembered that, according to the mind of the Church, the Office is a choral service: that is, a public service sung or recited with a certain ceremonial. This should be borne in mind carefully by those who, for any reason, are prevented from joining in the recitation in choir. As regards

[1] Rom. viii. 29.

[2] Apoc. xii. 1.

he Psalms, the practice of singing them antiphonally, that is, by two choirs, each taking a verse in turn, is said to have been first introduced by St. Ignatius, the third bishop of Antioch, on account of a vision in which he had heard angels praising the Blessed Trinity in alternate choir [1]. Compare the vision of Isaias : *I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim . . . and they cried one to another and said : Holy, Holy, Holy, the Lord of Hosts : all the earth is full of His glory* [2]. The custom appears to have been introduced into the West by St. Ambrose at Milan [3].

After the Psalms comes spiritual reading ; and this (as far as concerns the Little Office) is from the Sacred Scripture. This follows the same course of interpretation as the Psalms, being, like them, the Word of God. Jesus is again the explanation of the Scripture, both Old and New ; for they both refer to Him. He was looked forward to in the Old and set forth in the New. *Many prophets and righteous men have desired to see the things that you see and have not seen them* [4], He said ; and once more : *Search ye the Scriptures . . . for the same are they that give testimony of Me* [5]. And what is true of Him is, in due measure, true of His members, and principally of our ever dear and blessed Lady. We need not, at present, linger over the consideration of the extracts from the Scriptures to be found in the Office, as they will be treated fully in their proper place.

From an early time, at least from that of St. Ambrose, hymns were introduced into the public prayer of the Church. St. Hilary of Poitiers (368) is the earliest hymn-writer in the West. St. Benedict makes use of them in his Office. Hymns in the Office are employed to rouse the soul by their cheerfulness and jubilation. St. Augustine gives this definition of a hymn : " A song in praise of God ; if it be not addressed to God it is no hymn, nor is it a hymn except it set forth His praise." The three hymns in our Office of our Lady answer well to that definition ; for in singing the praises of God's

[1] Amalarius *De eccles Off.*, iv. 7.

[2] Isaias vi. 1, 2, 3.

[3] Rabanus Maurus, *Migne, P. L.*, vol. vii. p. 363.

[4] Matthew xiii. 17.

[5] John v. 39.

sweet Mother-Maid we are praising Him Who hath done such mighty things to her [1] and has made her all she is. The three hymns we make use of, the *Ave Maris stella*, *Quem terra, pontus, sidera*, and *O gloriosa Virginum*, are sometimes attributed to Fortunatus, of Poitiers, who died 600. In the form used at the present day the two last have suffered from revisions made in the time of Urban VIII., and have lost something of their old rugged beauty. For thirteen hundred years they have been sung in God's Church, and are hallowed by the memories of countless saints and servants of God who have greeted Christ's Mother in their sweet strains. They seem to sum up in their short, concise, lines thoughts too deep for expression, thoughts that will only bear the slightest expression. We seem to treat her as she treated her Son ; in all simplicity indicating her want. She said : *They have no wine* [2] ; we say, *Bona cuncta posce*, Ask for us all good things.

Other features which need a word of explanation are : the Antiphons, the Invitatory, the Responsories, the Versicles and Responses, and the Prayers. "The object of the Invitatory is to kindle within us the spirit of prayer by fixing our thoughts upon Him Who is the object of our adoration and praise. It is to the Office what a text is to a discourse, the primary thought to which everything else is subordinated. We repeat it many times, so that we may thoroughly understand it, grasp all its shades of meaning and be penetrated deeply with it. . . . The 94th Psalm is the development of the Invitatory ; as this is the refrain of the psalm and its special application. . . . In it we hear Jesus inviting us and calling upon us to bless with Him our Sovereign King. To kindle our fervour He recalls the works of God and His infinite perfections, and awakens in our heart reverence and love, two sentiments which react one on the other and are essential to the spirit of religion. The first part of the Psalm inspires a lively desire to praise God, and the second cautions us against indifference and heedlessness in His service" [3]. The Invitatory, as its name implies, is an invitation or a calling. Its form, consisting of a psalm (the 94th) with a short phrase repeated between

[1] Luke i. 49.

[2] St. John ii. 2, 3.

[3] Bacquez, pp. 336-8.

each verse, is an interesting survival of the oldest way of singing a psalm. The verses of the psalm were sung by a lector, or cantor, and the people, who neither had books, nor, at night-time, light, contented themselves with listening to what he sang and repeating, after every verse, the phrase which, as it were, gave the key to the whole psalm and kept up the fervour of the listeners. In the case of the Little Office the Invitatory is, *Ave Maria gratia plena, Dominus Tecum*, "whereby," says the devout author of the *Myroure*, "each of you stirreth and exhorteth others to the praising of God and of our Lady" [1].

The Antiphons are to the Psalms what the Invitatory is to the *Venite*; they give the key to the application of the Psalm. Durandus thus discourses on the Antiphon: "It is begun before the Psalm, signifying action; and this sets forth the bond of charity or mutual love without which labour avails not and whereby labour has its merit. Rightly, therefore, according to its melody is formed the tone of the Psalms; because love shapes our words. So the Psalm is intoned according to the melody of the Antiphon, and the hand works according to that which the spark of love hath excited. . .

. The Antiphon is said imperfectly before, and perfectly after the Psalm, because Charity here below is imperfect; here it is begun; but in heaven, our true country, it is made perfect by good works which flow from love, according to the words of Isaias: *The Lord Whose fire is in Sion and His furnace in Jerusalem* [2]. Yet in the greater of our feasts the Antiphon is said entire before the Psalms also, to teach us that in those times we should shew ourselves more perfect in good works. It is begun by one of one choir and ended by many of both

[1] P. 83, "After certain verses of the psalm the Invitatory is repeated entire; and after others, imperfectly, because although all are thereby invited to the praise of God, yet some accept this invitation perfectly, and some imperfectly. It is said six times in its entirety because they receive the invitation entire who render perfectly praise to God. Because six is the first perfect number, being formed by 1, 2 and 3, therefore it is repeated six times entire. And it is repeated three times imperfectly on account of those three sorts of men who did not accept the invitation to supper, viz., the covetous, the haughty, and the unclean, or by reason of our three-fold imperfection of heart, word, and deed." Durandus, *Rationale*, Lib. V., cap. III.

[2] xxxi. 9.

choirs; first because love begins from one, that is Christ, and through Him is perfected in His members. As He saith in St. John's gospel: *A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another* [1]. God first loved us, and therefore we must correspond in common to His love. Moreover, the Antiphons after the Psalms are sung by all in common, because from common love ariseth joy. The song is of two choirs alternately to signify mutual love or charity, which cannot exist among fewer than two. Thus the Antiphon joins the two choirs as love joins two brothers by good works. Isidore saith the Greek word "Antiphon" signifies a reciprocal voice, because two choirs answering each other alternate the song of the melody as the two seraphims and the two Testaments call one to another. Wherefore clerks singing Antiphons turn not to the altar, but towards one another, which manner of singing was introduced by the Greeks and is from them derived" [2].

The Responsories are the complement to the Lessons. "It is a return of the soul or a lifting up of it to God on account of what has been said. The Responsory is to the Lesson what the Antiphon is to the Psalms; but it has a more practical motive. It serves to fix the soul upon the special object of the Office, and it suggests useful application of the words. It recalls an important truth, viz., it is not sufficient to hear God's word, we must keep it, meditate on it, and try to fathom it, and put it into practice." In the Office of our Lady they form beautiful prose hymns in her honour and are full of a peculiar sweetness. "The Responsory is added to the Lessons; and by it is signified that by good works we must respond to the doctrine, that we may not be cast into outer darkness with the slothful servant who hid his Lord's money. They are, as it were, spiritual songs; for those things are called songs which are sung; and they are spiritual because they proceed from the jubilation of the spiritual mind. But they are sung that in the recitation of the Lesson our minds may be lifted up to the heavenly Fatherland, and therefore *Gloria Patri* is inserted [3]. The

[1] St. John xiii. 34.

[2] *Op. cit.*, cap. II.

[3] St. Benedict seems to have been the first to introduce the *Gloria Patri* into the Responsories.

Responsory is begun by one, to be joined in by others, whereby we understand the mutual exhortation of brethren to serve God. It is repeated imperfectly after the verse, to signify that those who cannot attain to the Mountain, that is, to the state of perfection, may yet be saved in Zoar, that is in another way and in a state of imperfection [1]. It is also repeated imperfectly to signify that what we do while being in this world is imperfect . . . but on festivals it is again repeated perfectly to signify the joy and perfection of the saints [2].

The Lessons said at Matins in the Office of our Lady are three in number, and are followed by Responsories. The same pious author says respecting the Lessons: "Three things are needful to the common health of man. The first is that the understanding be enlightened with knowledge of the truth to know what is good or what is evil. And for this knowledge is had by reading and hearing of wholesome doctrine, therefore is it understood by the Lessons. The second is good use of the free will that the will assent to love that ~~is~~ known (to be) good, and to hate that that is known (to be) evil. And for the will answereth thus to the knowing: therefore it is to (be) understood by the Response, that is as much (as) to say, an answer; for it answereth in sentence to the Lesson as is before said. The third is work, so that that thing that the understanding knoweth (to be) evil, and the will hateth, be fled indeed, and eschewed. And that thing that the understanding knoweth (to be) good and that the will ruled by grace loveth, be done indeed. And this is understood by the Verse that is as much (as) to say as a turning, for the knowledge and will ought thus to be turned into deed; and after the Verse a part of the Response is sung again. For as good will causes good deeds, so good deeds help to establish and to strengthen the good will.

"The Lessons are heard and the Response are sung sitting, for knowing of truth and right ruling of the will may not be put in a restful soul. But the Verse is sung standing, for good deeds may not be done without labour. The Response

[1] Gen. xix. 22.

[2] Durandus, *Loc. cit.*

is sung of all, for every man may have a good will that is understood by the Response. But the Verse is sung but of a few, for all folk may not fulfil their good wills in deed, that is understood by the Verse, so much so as the holy Apostle St. Paul saith that he might not do the good that he would [1]. The Lesson is read of one and heard of all, in token that each congregation ought to live under one governor that shall teach them and rule them after God's Law. For each man, namely religious, ought not to do after his own wit or knowing, but after the obedience and teaching of Holy Church and of his sovereign" [2].

The Versicles and Responses are short ejaculations which help us by a sudden change to recover our recollection if our minds have wandered during the psalmody or after a long hymn [3].

The Liturgical prayer of the Church always ended with the special petitions of those present. This was either in silence, or with the *Pater Noster* as St. Benedict orders; or after an interval of silence, heralded by the word *Oremus*—let us pray; the one who presided *collected*, so to say, the aspirations and petitions of all present into some short and comprehensive formula, which he, in their name, presented to God. Hence the name of *Collect* [4] often given to these prayers. They are beautiful examples of vocal prayer, short, pithy, and to the point. There is not *much speaking* [5] in them. That wonderful series of collects in the Sunday Masses throughout the year, is a very mine of sweetness and serves admirably as a foundation for mental prayer in its true form. The form of a collect is simple in the extreme; it embraces but one main petition, and consists of only one sentence: "Ordinarily we

[1] Rom. vii. 15.

[2] *Myroure*, pp. 114-5.

[3] The word Versicle, a little verse, means a "turning" of the mind to God.

[4] Most of the Collects in the Missal (whence those of the Breviary are taken) are the arrangements of St. Leo the Great (461), St. Gelasius (496), and St. Gregory the Great (604). A recent writer says: "The Collect form, as we have it, is Western in every feature, in unity of sentiments and severity of style; in its Roman brevity and majestic conciseness, its freedom from all luxurious ornament, and all inflations of phraseology."

[5] St. Matthew vi. 7.

address God the Father, because He is the origin of all things, and all things flow from Him even in the Blessed Trinity ; then He is only invoked through the Son according to our Lord's recommendation, *Whatsoever ye ask ask in My Name* [1]. We never directly invoke the Holy Ghost because we consider Him as dwelling in the Church and praying by the mouth of her ministers" [2].

These collects are models for our own private prayers. The long addresses to God, so much affected in modern books of devotion, seem to savour of that *much speaking* reprobated by our Lord. In the prayers of the Church there is no false sentimentality, no exaggeration ; but a sober, simple statement of our want without going into close particulars, and a mention of the grounds upon which we base our prayers.

"Orisons (Collects) are said at the end of each hour ; for the Apostles, whenever they were together, they knelt down on their knees and prayed ere they departed asunder. And she that sayeth the orison standeth turned to the East ; for Paradise, from whence we are exiled, is in the East, and therefore, thinking what we have lost, and where we are, and whither we desire, we pray turned towards the East " [3].

Having thus treated of the general materials used in the Office of our Lady, we proceed to indicate the form in which they are used.

First as to Matins : after the introductory versicles and invitatory with the hymn, three psalms, changing with the day of the week, together with their own antiphons, are said or sung. Then follow three lessons with responsories. The third lesson, however (out of Advent), being followed by the hymn *Te Deum*. Then follows Lauds, which is composed of the usual Sunday psalms of the Divine Office. These are of immemorial use at this hour. There are eight psalms altogether sung under five antiphons. These are followed by the little chapter, or short lesson, which is in turn succeeded by the hymn. After a short versicle, the Gospel canticle *Benedictus Deus* is chanted, together with its

[1] St. John xiv. 13.

[2] Bacquez, p. 414.

[3] *Myroure*, p. 134.

own antiphon. Then follow the prayers. The four Little Hours are based on another plan. After the introductory versicles a hymn, then three psalms under one antiphon. A short lesson, versicles, and prayer. Vespers is developed on the same lines as Lauds, but with only five psalms. The formation of this hour shows its ancient connection with Lauds as being with it the original public prayer of the Church. Compline stands by itself; special introductory versicles, three psalms, without any antiphon, as in the Benedictine use, a hymn, a canticle, with its own antiphon, which is followed by versicles and prayer. Needless to say that the formation of these hours is taken mainly from the Roman pattern of the Office. It will be noticed how the number three runs through the whole Office. In it we may see our worship to the Blessed Three in One, or an incitement to praise God for the threefold relationship of our Lady, as Daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Eternal Son, and Spouse of the Eternal Spirit; or as the expressions of our Faith, Hope and Charity.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE PSALMS.

Holy Scripture admits of a four-fold interpretation: the *Literal*, or historical sense; the *Allegorical*, or that which refers to faith or the Church Militant; the *Anagogical*, referring to eternal life in the Church triumphant; the *Tropological*, or moral sense, concerning the manner of reaching heaven. Durandus gives this example: "In like manner Jerusalem is understood *literally* of that earthly city whither pilgrims journey; *allegorically* of the Church Militant; *tropologically* of every faithful soul; *anagogically* of the heavenly Jerusalem which is our country."

But these four may be reduced to two; the literal and the mystical, and both of these may be the sense originally intended by the Holy Ghost when inspiring the writers. Our Lord Himself used the mystical interpretation when He took the case of Jonas, and applied it to His own resurrection, and when He spoke of the *Temple, His Body*. In the many parables He was intending a mystical sense, *e.g.*, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, or that of the Prodigal Son. The Apostles, following His example, often give a mystical sense to the Scripture, and quote this sense as being, without controversy, the real meaning of the text. For instance, St. Paul says: *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine; for the Scripture saith: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn* [1 Tim. v. 17, 18]. And again: *Saith not the law the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses: Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God care for oxen? or saith He it not altogether for our sakes? For our sakes no doubt this was written* [1 Cor. ix. 9, 10.] Then, again, in that famous saying of Osee: *When Israel was a child then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt* [xi. 1]; which St. Matthew unhesitatingly takes in a mystical

sense and applies it to our Lord, saying distinctly that the return from the sojourn in Egypt was its fulfilment.

This kind of interpretation the Church has always admitted ; and, guided by the same Holy Spirit that inspired the writers, she has not hesitated to declare, in certain cases, that the mystical interpretation is the primary one intended by the Holy Ghost. For instance, the whole of the Cantic of Canticles, she takes as referring to the mystical Espousals of God and the soul, although the literal sense refers to an earthly bride and bridegroom. And the description of Wisdom Holy Church applies officially in the Missal and the Breviary to our Lady. We are bound to accept this interpretation, not only as lawful, but also as true, as it is given by her who is the sole interpreter of Holy Writ. This is also an application of the old principle that from the Church's prayers can be gathered the Church's belief.

The piety of Christians has been fed on mystical interpretation for hundreds of years ; and souls have grown in holiness by its means. The work has been that of God's saints and has resulted from their interior light and close union with God. It may seem to us, at first sight, that a few of the writers have gone rather wide of the mark and that their interpretations are somewhat far-fetched ; but a closer attention to their meaning and to the steps by which they arrive at their conclusions will often show us that they have had a far deeper insight into the meaning of God's Word than we have who criticise them.

Following out the theory that the Psalms all speak of Jesus, that they are His words, we get at once into the mystical sense, and such phrases as these : *The righteous one ; the poor man ; thy servant ; the Word ; the good thing*—will all have new depths of meaning when we apply them to Him Who was on earth the righteous man, and so poor that He had nowhere to lay His head ; the faithful servant Who did his Father's will ; the Eternal Word which gives us here below the Good Thing of the Blessed Sacrament and hereafter eternal life.

Again, we may take the case, so often occurring, of the names, Jerusalem and Sion ; the first, "The Vision of Peace," being interpreted of the Church Triumphant ; the second "Expectation," of the Church Militant. As for example : *That they may declare the name of the Lord in Sion and His worship in Jerusalem, when the people are gathered together and the kings also to serve the Lord* [Ps. ci. 22]. Or another : *Deal favourably, O Lord, in Thy goodwill with Sion ; and then, by a very beautiful sequence, And the walls of Jerusalem shall be built up* [Ps. l. 18], because through God's love and mercy to the Church here, those spiritual stones are prepared by which the walls of the Eternal Temple are to be built on high [Neale, vol. i., p. 451]. And once more. *May the Lord from out of Sion bless thee that thou mayest see the good things of Jerusalem all the days of thy Life* [Ps. cxxvi. 5], that is, by the means of grace stirred up in the Church we may attain the good things of life eternal. It is seldom in Scripture that these two words, either used separately or in contrast, cannot be thus explained in the mystical sense. The same applies to Jacob and Israel. The *supplanter*, he that has a hard struggle to attain his inheritance, is a figure of the Church on earth ; while Israel, *He that sees God*, at once suggests the Church in heaven.

This brief note will be enough to give us a warrant for a solid ground for interpreting the Psalms in a mystical sense as given in the Commentary which forms the third part of this work. The holy writers, from whose work the Commentary is woven, arrived at their interpretation, after years of prayer, after days of penance. Is it too much to say that, if we wish to understand the Psalms as they understood

them, we must follow some way, at least, along the path they trod? God alone, Who inspired the Scriptures, can *open our understandings that we may understand the Scriptures*, as He did to the two disciples on the road to Emmaus; and the dignity of our work, when saying Office, demands that we should pray Him to give us also light to penetrate the sense of the words we utter.

One last word. Except where the Church has officially adopted one meaning before any others, and this is the mystical sense in the proper meaning of the word, the interpretations given in the writings of the Fathers are not to be considered as infallible; they are only private explanations which we are free to use or reject as they appeal to us. They are often based on analogy and explain the Scripture in what is technically called an "accommodated" sense. The Angelical says: "It belongs to the dignity of Holy Scripture to contain in one letter many senses . . . Hence, if some things not understood by the author are fitted by interpreters of Holy Scripture, it is not doubtful but that the Holy Ghost understood them in that sense, for He is the principal Author of Holy Scripture."

CHAPTER III.

THE HISTORY OF THE LITTLE OFFICE.

BEFORE concluding the theoretical part of our study on the Little Office, we must trace out its history ; for the lessons of the Past are the best means of understanding the Present.

The earliest account of the Office is to be found at Monte Cassino, of which Cardinal Bona says : " I have the testimony of Peter the deacon, a Casinese. He wrote a remarkable commentary on the rule of St. Benedict, the manuscript of which is kept at Rome by Don Constantine Cajetan. In this book Peter, speaking of the consecration of the abbat of Monte Cassino, says : ' On this day the abbat must take nothing but bread and water, and must not omit the seven canonical hours in commemoration of holy Father Benet, besides that which it is customary to perform in honour of the holy Mother of God, which Zachary, the Pope, commanded under strict precept to the Casinese monastery, ordering that all the year round, in summer, as well as in winter, before the night or day office, the brethren, as soon as they enter the choir, should begin the Office of St. Benet, and that finished, they should commence the Office which the Rule prescribes, adding thereunto the Office of the holy Mother of God and Virgin Mary.' This aforesaid Peter elsewhere refers the institution to Gregory II. But as Gregory, according to Baronius, began his pontificate in the year of salvation 715, after whom came Gregory III. in 731 ; and then Zachary, who succeeded in 741 ; the use and ordering of this Office is therefore more ancient than is commonly thought " [1].

From the way Peter the deacon speaks of it, a form of

[1] Cf. Bona, *De Divina Psalmodia*, ed. (1677), p. 327.

Office of our Lady must have been already in use. In the *Acta Sanctorum* we read that St. Ildephonsus, the great servant of our Lady in Spain, composed an office in her honour, the greater part of which is embodied in the modern Liturgy for the feast of the Expectation. St. Ildephonsus lived in the latter part of the seventh century. How much further back the devotion can be traced we cannot safely say. But the Carmelites, who claim to have kept up a continued succession on Mount Carmel from the very days of Elias, may have, traditionally, an earlier date for their Office. In the Eastern Church the earliest example of an Office of our Lady is that of the Greek Church, which, it is said, can be traced back to St. John Damascene (730). It is called the *Paracletica*, and consists of fifty-six sets of Vespers, each containing several hymns, lessons, and prayers.

The above is sufficient to show that a liturgical form of prayer in honour of our Lady is of early times ; but what precise form it had we have not, at present, the means of saying. For it must not be supposed that it was the same as what we have to-day or anything like it. What, then, is the origin of our Little Office ? Here we begin to tread on surer ground. Mr. Edmund Bishop, the greatest living authority on Liturgy, in the masterly essay which he wrote for the Early English Text Society's edition of the "Primer or Layfolk's Prayer-Book," has given a patient and masterly account of the origin ; and, so far, he shall be our guide. It must be remembered that the English "use" differs from the Roman in certain particulars, such as antiphons, lessons, &c., but the general structure is the same and points to a common origin.

In the great Benedictine revival which began in England in the days of St. Dunstan, St. Ethelwold and St. Oswald, we find introduced certain customs which had already found place in continental monasteries. These are contained in the *Concordia regularis* of St. Ethelwold, which represents the practice of English monasticism of about the middle of the tenth century. They consisted mainly of the addition of prayers to the Divine Office.

In England, where we find customs taken from the great abbeys of Fleury and Ghent, the additional prayers were :

the Gradual Psalms said before Matins (during the longer hours of winter extra psalms were said, sometimes to the number of thirty); the Penitential psalms with the Litany of the Saints said after Prime; the Office of the Dead [1]; the Office of All Saints (lauds and vespers only); and after each hour the *psalmi familiares*, that is, two psalms with Collects said for the king and queen and other benefactors [2]. "The devotional accretions, whereby the Divine Office was so greatly lengthened, were not said in full in Eastertide or on feast-days of a high grade; speaking technically, they were only said in full on ferial days" [3].

By the close of the tenth century, perhaps before, these additional prayers were in use throughout the Benedictine monasteries in England, France, Germany, and most likely in Italy. But while here are the facts, how are we to account for them? Their origin is thus:—

"It will be readily conceived that such devotional additions and accretions will not easily have found their origin with the secular clergy engaged in the active duties of the ministry and generally dispersed, or at most but loosely organised; whilst, on the other hand, such additions to the prescribed divine service almost inevitably must ensue upon the decrease of manual labour in the monasteries, such as already had taken place by the ninth century; and any revival or reform of monastic discipline would, in such circumstances, be naturally accompanied as a dictate of piety, by the adoption of novel and extraordinary devotional practices in addition to the traditional Office" [4].

This we find, as a matter of fact, was one of the results of the reforms made by St. Benedict of Aniane; and it is

[1] "The origin of this office is obscure," says Mr. Bishop, "a recent writer has declared it to be purely Roman and a creation of the beginning of the eighth century. Extant testimonies by no means warrant so confident a tone . . . It is probable that these offices of the dead, at least in the general way, represent practices prevailing in Italian monasteries also" (p. xvii.). "It is after all not improbable that Benedict of Aniane may actually have introduced and practised the devotion of a daily recital of the Office of the Dead" (p. xx.).

[2] Reyner's *Apostolatus*, iii. 77. It is worth noting the frequent use of the Psalms as prayers for all occasions. The Psalter was the general Prayer-Book.

[3] p. xxiv. 5.

[4] p. xiv.

almost certain that the custom of saying the fifteen Gradual Psalms before Matins dates from him. Some of his ideas had a wide influence. "By the second half of the tenth century, as has been observed, the testimony of monastic custom books is uniform, that the recitation of the fifteen gradual Psalms before Matins obtained everywhere" [1].

It will be noted that some of these extra prayers took the form of Offices, *e.g.*, of the Dead, of All Saints. "Themselves an imitation of the original Divine Office, or *Cursus* as it was from long tradition called, such offices . . . once fairly established, were in the then temper of men's minds sure to call forth imitations. And in fact, ingenious piety invented many a new *cursus*; those of the Blessed Virgin and of the Holy Cross are the first to appear; to which by-and-bye were added those of the Incarnation, of the Holy Trinity, and of the Holy Ghost. Each represented a special devotional attraction of some individual, and each was said in the same way in which the customary recitation of the Office of the Dead and of All Saints had made familiar, viz., as a private daily devotional addition to the Divine Office itself, in strict imitation of it, and like the Office, as a *daily* exercise throughout the year [2]. Of these numerous later products of an exuberant piety, only one, the Office of the Blessed Virgin, was destined to take its place as an additional *cursus* to the Divine Office, alongside of the Office of the Dead, and, like it, secure public recitation in the Church, eventually ousting, even in the monasteries, the long-established, older *cursus* of All Saints" [3]. This last only remained, as in the "Use" of the Sarum, in the form of commemorations after Lauds and Vespers, and in the present Roman use by the *Commemoration of All Saints*.

But when exactly are we to locate its origin? When

[1] Reyner's *Apostolatus*.

[2] "The Einsiedeln Customs, drawn up not long after the year 970, as it would seem, and certainly before 990 or 995, not only confirm the existence and the spread of such a *cursus* of the Blessed Virgin in Germany at this time, but they also show that the transition from the stage of a mere private devotion to an actual place in the public office of the Church was already accomplished" (p. xxvii.).

[3] pp. xxv.-vi.

the Norman Conquest took place the English Church was thoroughly reorganised according to the ideas of the new masters. As part of the work, Lanfranc drew up a set of Statutes for the use of the monks of the primatial Church of Canterbury. These very Statutes are a clear proof that the Office of our Lady was not introduced into English monasteries by Norman monks. They are a further proof that, if it had been in vogue in these monasteries before the Conquest, the foreigners, who posed somewhat as models of regular observance, had not hesitated to abolish it as "mere Englishry." They did so, we know, as regards the purely English feast of the Conception of our Lady, which took its origin at Winchester [1]. There can be but little doubt that the Office of our Lady is connected with that great spread of devotion to her which was so marked a feature of the English Church, from the days of SS. Dunstan and Ethelwold, and of which the above-mentioned feast is a striking evidence. The trend of all the evidence points to English Benedictism as one, if not *the* one, origin of the Little Office of our Lady.

St. Udalric, Bishop of Augsburg (about 970), is an early example of its use: "The daily *cursus* with his clerics he carefully observed in the choir of the mother-church. Moreover, unless some inevitable necessity prevented him, he was accustomed every day to say one *cursus* in honour of Holy Mary, the Mother of God, a second in honour of the Holy Rood, and a third in honour of All Hallows, besides many other psalms, and the whole Psalter" [2].

In the *Chronicon* of Hugh, Abbot of Flavigny [3] there is a story of Berengarius, Bishop of Verdun (940-962), going one night, as was his wont, to the Church of our Lady to pray before the Office, and there, in the darkness, stumbling over the prostrate form of the provost of that Church—Bernerius by name—"who, then prostrate on the ground, was saying the Matins of our Lady" [4].

[1] Not only was the feast of the Conception of Our Lady kept in Anglo-Saxon England on December 8th, but also those of St. Joseph (March 19th), and St. George (April 23rd). The testimony of an Anglo-Saxon Calendar in the British Museum is explicit on this point. The Normans abolished all three.

[2] Reyner's *Apostolatus*, xxvi.

[3] His life by his disciple Gerard (Migne, P. L., vol. cxxxv., p. 1016).

[4] Migne, P. L., vol. cliv., p. 197.

But be this as it may, the devotion rapidly spread. In the year 1095 Pope Urban II., the friend of St. Bruno, held a council at Claremont for the purpose of stirring up Christendom to undertake the Crusades. On this occasion, to obtain a special blessing from heaven, he ordered that all clerics should follow the example of the monks and add the Little Office of our Lady to the Greater Office. And, at the same time, he earnestly recommended its use to the faithful laity [1].

St. Peter Damian, O.S.B. (1072), was a great promoter of the Little Office of our Lady. Writing to the hermits of Gamonium he speaks of the monastery of our Lady of Monte Petra Pertusa, where, for three years the Little Office had been daily added to the ordinary *cursus*; and where at the suggestion of a certain monk it was discontinued: but presently, storms and attacks, and losses of all kinds fell on the monastery in punishment, and only ceased when they resumed the pious practice [2]. In a beautiful letter to one Stephen, a monk, he exhorts him to say the Office of our Lady every day; and quotes the example of a certain French cleric of Nivers who said it every day, and in reward was specially helped by our Lady at his death [3].

In the next century we can trace it somewhat further. The White Monks (Cistercians) began to sweep away the accumulations of extra prayers which had gathered round the Greater Office; and they were followed by the White Canons of Prémontré, but with different results, the White Monks keeping only the Little Office of our Lady, and the White Canons that of the Dead.

It seems to have come down to the clergy through the Black or Austin Canons, a body that formed, as it were, the link between the monks and the clergy. This was in keeping with the past, as we have pointed out in the case of Matins, which were adopted from the monks and imposed on the clergy. These later accretions to the Divine Office were also at first taken up by the clergy, in imitation of the monks, and finally became an acknowledged part of their daily duty. The

[1] Mansi, tom. xx., p. 827.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. cxliv., p. 431.

[3] p. 420.

date of this was in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, thus coinciding with the establishments of cathedral Chapters on the new model, and with that magnificent outburst which would naturally give rise to a revision of the Church offices in general. By the end of the thirteenth century the Little Office and that of the Dead were established in secular use. Sarum and Lincoln bear witness to this; and from the books of these two churches we learn that Matins, Lauds, and Vespers of our Lady were said in choir; the "Little Hours" in the Ladye Chapel before the daily "Ladye Mass," while Compline was said privately after the Compline of the day. When the Council of Trent left the reformation of the Missal and Breviary to the Pope, St. Pius V. in the bull *Quod A. Nobis* (1568) released the clergy from an obligation which had for so many hundred years been laid upon them. The Pontiff says: "On account of the various businesses of this life and indulgent to the occupations of many, we have thought it well to remove the occasion of sin from this matter; but, warned by the weight of the Pastoral care, we vehemently exhort all in the Lord, that seconding our remission as far as can be done, by their own devotion and diligence, they should, by these prayers, suffrages, and praises, endeavour to provide for the salvation of themselves and of others." And he grants to all who say the Office of our Lady, on the days mentioned in the Rubrics, an indulgence of one hundred days for each recitation. The days prescribed are on all simples and ferias throughout the year, except Saturdays, which, from old custom, had a special votive office in honour of our Lady [1].

This Office of our Lady, the growth of many years, is largely practised in the Church. The older order of monks and friars keep up its recitation on fixed days; and the numerous congregation of women called to special active work have no other office but this. St. Francis of Sales says of it in the order which he founded that: "The Office of our Lady is the soul of devotion in the Convents of the Visitation." Many of the newer orders say the Office in choir, carrying out as far as possible all the choral ceremonies. Some others, who

[1] In the customs of Einsiedeln, we find the Votive Office of our Lady assigned to the Saturday.

are called away for hours by the nature of their work, have to content themselves with private recitation, keeping choir with their guardian angels.

Having thus traced the origin of the Little Office, it will not be amiss to see what evidence there is for its recitation among the laity; and, confining ourselves to England, we may easily gather that in the Dowry of Mary it was a favourite devotion. The rise of the art of printing naturally gave a great impulse to the recitation; for manuscript books of the Hours, such as are still kept in our museums, would be too costly for the generality of lay folk. But when printing made it possible, we find an extraordinary growth; and this, too, in a remarkable way. Not only was the Little Office available for the body of the faithful, but it was given them in the vernacular, in books called the *Primer or Lay Folks' Prayer-Book* [1].

Caxton's "Boke of Courteseye" (1477) contains some verses to "Little John" concerning his behaviour. Among them is the direction:—

" And while that you be about honestly
To dress yourself and do on your array,
With your fellow well and tretably
Our Lady matins look that you say;
And this observance use ye every day
With praise and hours withouten drede
The Blessed Lady will quit you your mede " [2].

The Eton statutes prescribes that the scholars, after rising and making their beds, should say the Matins of our Blessed Lady after "Sarum use." Henry VI., the munificent founder of the College, had a special devotion to the Office, which he said every day. Cardinal Fisher, in his funeral sermon on the Countess of Richmond, mother of Henry VII., says: "First in prayer every day at her uprising, which commonly was not long after five of the clock, she began certain devotions; and so after them with one of her gentlewomen, the Matins of

[1] The one recently reprinted by the Early English Text Society is from a MS. of about 1420.

[2] p. 5.

our Lady," besides the greater Office which she said with her chaplain, and heard four or five masses [1].

The Venetian Ambassador, in *A relation of the Island of England* [2], about the year 1496, tells his Government about the life of our Catholic forefathers and says: "Although they all attend Mass every day and say many *paternosters* in public (the women carrying long rosaries in their hands, and any that can read taking the Office of our Lady with them, and with some companion reciting it in the church verse by verse after the manner of churchmen), they always hear Mass on Sunday in their parish church and give liberal alms, because they may not offer less than a piece of money of which fourteen are equivalent to a golden ducat; nor do they omit any form incumbent upon good Christians."

About the period of the Reformation we find editions of the Primers printed in 1538, 1546, and several between 1551 and 1558. When Elizabeth destroyed the work restored by Mary, many of the people still clung to their old practices of devotion. In 1569, "Thomas Wright, vicar of Seaham, confesses that he says daily in his house, with certain others, the Offices of the Blessed Virgin" [3]. One of the earliest publications of Dr. Allen was a Primer for the use of the persecuted Catholics. This came out in 1571, and was followed in 1599 by Richard Verstegan's edition and many others [4]. It was the favourite prayer of our brave confessors, and shows that they formed themselves on the simple, bold, direct prayer of the Church, and were thus able to cultivate a spirit of solid catholicity which withstood all shocks from within and without.

Nowadays, many pious lay-folk use the Little Office as their daily prayer. It is part of the rule for Dominican, Carmelite, and Augustinian Tertiaries. The Franciscan Third

[1] "The English works of John Fisher" [E.E.T.S.], p. 292.

[2] Camden Society's Publications, p. 23.

[3] "Depositions," p. 199, Surtees Society.

[4] Besides those in the text, there are editions of 1604, 1615, 1619, 1632, 1650, 1658, 1684, and 1685. All these were printed abroad. The first one printed in London was 1687. In 1706 appeared one with hymns translated by Dryden, and there are editions of the years 1717 and 1732.

Order used it; and when Leo XIII., by his late Letters Apostolic, brought the tertiary rule more into harmony with the state of modern society, although he does away with the obligation of its recitation and orders instead the recital of twelve *paters*, he wishes that all who have time and opportunity should say the Little Office as heretofore.

PART II.

PRACTICAL.

He who fears the Lord neglecteth nothing, says the Holy Ghost [1]. The more important the work, the more necessary is it that it should be done properly. And are we called to any higher and more important work than that of being used by the Incarnate Word in His worship of the Eternal Father? Yet, from the weakness of human nature, from the instability of our minds, from the daily recitation of the selfsame words, we often say the Office in a careless, perfunctory manner, our lips repeating words which find but little or no echo in our heart.

There is, and must be, this danger for every one; and half of the remedy is to recognise our liability to fall short of our Lord's gracious designs. It will therefore be useful to gather together various practices, examples and thoughts, which have been found useful for guarding against the deadening effects of routine. They will help us to make our Office a living reality.

[1] Eccles. vii. 19.

CHAPTER I.

ON SAYING THE OFFICE AS THE CHURCH WISHES.

THE idea of the Office is that of a public prayer of the Church ; public, not only because we are public ministers of the Church ; but public, because it is designed to be said in a public manner. Careful of St. Paul's words : *Let everything be done decently and in order* [1], Holy Church has surrounded the recitation of her Public prayer with a minute code of rules and ceremonies, all of which are eminently calculated to help our soul to retain or regain the thought of God's Presence. In reciting the Office we should endeavour to make use of all the ceremonial she has ordained ; and let these forms do the work for which they are intended. Bowing the head and the body, signing ourselves with the Cross, standing up, sitting down, kneeling, facing the altar, or facing one another, are all ceremonies full of life and meaning to those who use them intelligently ; while those who neglect them, or carry them out carelessly, are misusing a great means of entering more perfectly into the dispositions of Jesus Christ. The author of the *Myroure* says : "Therefore the holy observances are not only to be kept of them that sing in the choir, but also of all others, to their power ; wherever they say their Service. For a religious person ought to be governed religiously over all, whether he be alone or with others and whatever he do, and namely, in the saying of this Holy Service. Nevertheless, they that have no convenient place to keep all observances and therefore say their Service in continual and reverent kneeling, or sometimes standing, I trow they are excused. But for to say it sitting or lying

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

(without need of sickness), or walking up and down ; it were a token of little love and of little reverence to God. For our Holy mother, St. Brigit, had in revelation, and wrote to a secular clerk that such walking to and fro in service time is a showing of an unstable and a vacant heart, and of a slow soul, and of little charity and devotion. And since it is so in seculars much more is it blameable in religious. And therefore the books that say how some have most devotion sitting, or else whether it be sitting, or kneeling, or going or standing, a man should do as he can feel most devotion ; such sayings are to be understood of the prayers and devotions that a man chooseth to say or to do after his own will. But in Our Lord's Service we ought to labour for devotion in such manner as Holy Church and religion hath ordained to be kept therein" [1].

The Carthusians, who say the Little Office every day, recite it in their cells ; but strictly carry out all the choir ceremonial. They know that they do not say it alone. For when the bell rings the whole Charter-house turns into a great choir and the monks *in the sight of the angels* [2] commence to praise Him Whose mother was Mary.

There is a point to which special attention ought to be drawn ; and that is, the fact that the first idea of the Office is that it should be *sung*. It is a choral office, and there is good reason for this. The author of the *Myroure* says :—

"And no marvel that the fiend be busy to hinder folks from the song of this holy Service ; for in devout singing and hearing thereof is manifold profit to man's soul. First, for it stirreth a man's soul sometime to contrition and compunction of his sins. For the holy doctor St. Isidore saith thus : 'Though the sweetness of the voice or song ought not to delight nor stir a Christian man's heart, but the words of God that are sung, yet I wot not in what wise more compunction ariseth in the heart than by the voice of singing. For there are many,' he saith, 'that by the sweetness of the song are stirred to wail and to weep their sins. And the sweeter that the song is, the more they follow out in weeping tears.' The second, it melteth the heart into more devotion, and

[1] pp. 62-63.

[2] Psalm cxxxviii. 42.

therefore saith Saint Augustine to God Himself in his confession : ‘Ah, Lord,’ he saith, ‘how I was stirred to joy and I wept in hymns and songs of Thy Church that sounded sweetly. The voices flowed into mine ears and truth was molten into my heart, and thereby the affection of piety and of love was made hot in me, and tears ran out of my eyes and I was full well with them.’ The third, it causeth sometime devout souls to be ravished and to receive spiritual gifts from God, as ye read in St. Maud’s (*Mechtilda*) book, how she had many of her revelations in time of God’s Service. And therefore at a time when Elias the prophet had not ready the spirit of prophecy he got him a singer of psalms on the harp or on the psaltery ; and while he sang the spirit of God came upon the prophet, and then he told by the spirit of prophecy to them that came unto him what they should do. The fourth profit of Holy Church song is, that it doth away (with) indiscreet heaviness. And therefore, saith the Apostle Saint James : *If any of you (he saith) be heavy ; let him sing and let him pray with an even heart* [1]. For as the Gloss saith there—the sweetness of singing and of psalmody putteth away noxious heaviness ; and Isidore saith that devout singing in Holy Church comforteth heavy hearts and maketh souls more gracious ; it refresheth them that are weary and tedious ; it quickeneth them that are dull, and it stirreth sinners to bewail their sins. For though the hearts (he saith) of fleshly people be hard, yet when the sweetness of that song soundeth in them their souls are stirred to the affections of piety. The fifth is, that it chaseth and driveth away the fiend ; and that was figured in David when the fiend vexed King Saul and David smote on his harp and the fiend fled away. And much more he fleeth where the Psalms of David and other Divine service is devoutly sung. The sixth profit is, that it confoundeth and overcometh the enemies of Holy Church and of God’s servants as well bodily as ghostly ; and this is shown in holy scriptures by King Josaphat that was King of Jerusalem [2]. For when his enemies came against him in so great power that he knew well that he might not by man’s power withstand them, he ordained singers of God’s service

[1] St. James v. 13.

[2] II. Paralip. 20.

to praise God and to go before his host singing. And when they began to praise God, God turned the enemy each of them against the other, and each of them slew the other, so that none of them all escaped alive. A marvellous working of God's service. . . . And thus you may see that there is no better armour of defence against all enemies than devout singing of our Lord's service ; wherefore David the prophet said thus : *Laudans invocabo Dominum et ab inimicis meis salvus ero* ; that is, I will call upon our Lord in praising, and so I shall be safe from all mine enemies. For it hath not been seen that ever any place was mischiefed where God's service was devoutly kept. The seventh profit of Holy Church song is, that it pleaseth so much God that He desireth and joyeth to hear it. And therefore He saith to His spouse, Holy Church : *Sonet vox tua in auribus meis* ; that is, Let thy voice sound in mine ears [1]. Glad, then, ought ye to be to sing that song that God Himself desireth to hear. But so it ought to be sung that it sound well in His ears, for else it availeth but little. For He taketh more heed of the heart than of the voice ; but when both accord in Him then is it best. And if either should fail it is better to lack the voice than the heart from Him. Therefore, they that would praise God with voice of singing and cannot or may not, our Lord will hold them excused, so that they say devoutly such service as they can, and keep their hearts clean in meekness and in obedience. For as our Lady said to St. Brigit : A clean heart and a meek pleaseth God in silence as well as in singing " [2].

This will show that it is profitable to follow out the Church's idea and to sing our Office ; and that it is a loss to neglect it altogether. There are few convents that cannot aim at singing each day or at least on Sundays and festivals the Office, either wholly or in part. The practice of fervent communities may here be recommended. If they cannot sing every day the whole of the Office they at least sing a part—such as Vespers every day—and on Sundays Lauds as well. On feasts of the second class, the Invitatory, Hymn and Te Deum at Matins, with the whole of Lauds and Vespers. On the Great feasts the whole of the Office. Some make a point of at least singing the Antiphon of our Lady after Lauds and Compline.

[1] Cant. 2.

[2] *Myroure*, pp. 32-35.

God does not want fine singing, but prayerful singing : not singing which tickles the ear, but that which raises up the soul ; singing which will not remind us, by earthly music, of the passing joys of this world, but rather a kind of unearthly music like that which is ever resounding through the heavenly courts. The Plain Song of the Church is most perfectly adapted to the spiritual needs of mankind when it is sung by those who know and love it. Nothing could be better and more fitting for religious than this chant which, we may add, requires a religious person to sing it properly. It is, then, indeed, a sweet echo of that New Song which no man can utter, as it should be uttered, unless he be taught by the Lamb Whose very Own Song it is.

Beautiful voices are God's gift and have to be used for Him ; and the music of God's worship should be of the very best. But loving hearts form a sweeter harmony before the Throne than the rarest voices, if full of self-love. He sings well, says St. Bernard, who sings to God. There is a beautiful story, told in the annals of a certain monastery, where the monks, all old men, sang as best their quavering, uncertain voices would let them. But once, when some high feast came round, they bethought themselves of getting the services of a skilful singer to chant the *Magnificat* in honour of the solemnity. He came. His voice, wondrously beautiful, clear and pure, and round in tone, like a flute, soared upwards and, ringing around the vaulted roof of the old minster, enchanted the hearers. "Would that we could have that fair singer with us every day," said the abbat to one of the ancients, who nodded his approval. But that night as the abbat lay a-bed, lo ! a great light, as of many suns, filled his cell, and in the midst thereof a Vision of One stood before him. It was the Mother of God, Mary ever blissful. "Why," said she, "have you on this high festival omitted my song, the *Magnificat* ?" "Lady !" said the abbat, "it was sung to-day, and in strains sweeter than we have ever heard before ; for as we be but a handful of feeble, croaking old men, with no music in our voices, we sought the rarest and most beautiful voice in the land to sing thy praise." "I heard it not," said the Vision. "No sound came from the minster at Even-Song, and mine

ears missed the music they are accustomed to hear daily from you and your brethren. That singer sang for himself and not for me ; so his song could not rise to my throne, but fell back earthwards again."

The liturgical spirit, so necessary to be cultivated now-a-days, is, when we look at it simply, only that of mere obedience to the Church. It consists in doing the Church's work in the Church's way. If, therefore, occupations hinder us from keeping choir still, in this spirit of desiring to carry out the Church's ideas as far as possible, we should endeavour to say our Office in church ; and for these reasons which the *Myroure* gives : "This holy service ought also to be said in due place ; that is, in the church ; except if sickness, or such reasonable cause, hinder that you may not come thither. For churches are hallowed and ordained for prayer and for Divine service to be said and heard therein as our Lord saith Himself : *Domus mea domus orationis vocabitur* [1], that is to say : 'My house, that is Holy Church, should be called a house of prayer.' And it is most profitable for you to pray in that place for many causes. (1) One for more worship of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother our Lady in whose worship the church is hallowed. (2) Another cause, for the blessing and the prayer of the bishop at the time of the hallowing of the church which helpeth and furthereth much the prayer of them that pray therein. (3) The third cause, for the Angels of God dwell there to help us in time of prayer, and to promote our prayers towards God. . . . And, therefore, saith St. Bernard : 'Oh, whoso had open eyes and might see with how great care and joy angels are amongst them that sing devoutly and pray !' [2] Wherefore he saith : 'I admonish you my most loved friends that you stand purely in the praising of God, and that you do it reverently and gladly. (4) The fourth cause is, for the fiends have less power to hinder prayer there than in any other place ; and therefore the patriarch, St. Jacob, after he had seen the vision said : *Quam terribilis est locus iste* [3], that is, How fearful is this place. For the holiness of the church and the devoted prayers made therein, and, namely,

[1] Matthew xxi. 13.

[2] *Super. Cant. serm.* 7.

[3] Gen.xxviii. 17.

the presence of the holy Sacrament of the Altar ; rebuketh the boldness of the fiend, and maketh him afeard. (5) The fifth cause is, for our Lord will take heed of them and hear their prayer that pray in holy church as He saith Himself : *Oculi mei erunt aperti et aures meæ ad orationem ejus qui in loco isto oraverit* [1], that is to say, Mine eyes shall be open to see Him and Mine ears dressed up to hear his prayer that prayeth in this place, that is Holy Church " [2].

And one more especial reason which should prompt us to say our Office in Church is the Abiding Presence of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. From the lowly tabernacle is ever going up before the Father the most perfect worship of adoration, of thanksgiving, of atonement, of prayer ; for Jesus is verily and indeed there. As we are chosen to give expression to these acts, as it is in union with Him as our Divine Head that our prayers have value in God's sight, we should delight to add our worship (which is indeed His) in union with that Life, all glorious and immortal, which He lives in the Sacramental state of the Eucharist [3]. *Oh magnify the Lord with Me* [4], He cries to us from the tabernacle. And there at His feet we can best obey His invitation.

[1] II. Paralip., vii. 15.

[2] *Myroure*, pp. 27, 28.

[3] The idea which a false sentimentality is trying to introduce, of *the Prisoner of the Tabernacle* is untrue, and against the very idea of the Adorable Mystery. Christ rose again never to die, never to suffer ; *Death shall no more have dominion over Him* (Rom. vi. 9). Therefore, in His sacramental Life the glory of light inaccessible, in which God dwells, surrounds Him in the Tabernacle. He is on the Altar, as He is in Heaven, the King of Glory ; but the manner of His presence is otherwise. There He is present naturally ; here, sacramentally. The Church has no other way for expressing His state in the Holy Eucharist but by saying it is a sacramental state, that is, one after the manner of a Sacrament which is an outward sign of inward grace. To bring in materialistic views into our ideas about the Blessed Sacrament is sure to do harm ; and the history of the Church is full of the mischief done thereby. St. Thomas the Angelical has set forth the dogma as far as human wit can fathom. With him we are safe, mindful of the words of Holy Writ, *Search not the things that are too high for thee, and search not into things above thine ability ; but the things that God hath commanded thee, think on them always, in many of His works be not curious* (Ecclesiasticus iii. 22). Faith and adoration is all we can do, aught else is but failure.

[4] Psalm xxxiii.

CHAPTER II.

ON RECOLLECTION BEFORE BEGINNING.

Before prayer prepare thy soul and be not like a man that tempteth God [1]. Do not let thy heart be swift to pour forth thy words before God. For God is in heaven and thou upon earth [2].

The consideration of what the Office is, should be quite enough to make us realise the necessity of due preparation before we begin. "For by the wound of original sin and by our own actual sin and evil custom, the corrupt body is so heavy and loath to all virtue and the heart so unstable that without great inward labour, and without we do a manner of violence to ourselves, we can neither make the rebel and disobedient flesh to do reverently; nor gather the mind in unity to (the) feeling of devotion" [3].

The Abbat Cisneros of Montserrat (about 1500), says in the "Directory for the Canonical Hours": "When we have risen from our beds and are dressed, staying awhile in our cell and standing where we are wont to pray, we should gather up our thoughts as best we can, and think thus within ourselves; what are we going to do, and why have we risen from our beds? For whosoever does not think before acting must needs be careless in his work. And what are we about to do, brethren, at the time of the Office unless it is to appear before the sight of God and His holy angels in the company of our just and holy brethren? Wherefore we must diligently bear in mind that we are going to (1) adore God; (2) give thanks to Him; (3) and pray to Him. . . . Therefore after dwelling on the aforesaid three points let us on our knees

[1] Ecclesiasticus xviii. 23.

[2] Ecclesiasticus v. 1.

[3] *Myroure*, p. 63.

humbly beseech the Lord to grant us worthily to adore Him in the judgments of His justice, and devoutly to pay Him the duty of our homage. When, therefore, the sound of the bell has struck upon our ears, rising from prayer, we should say : This is the sign of the great King ; let us go and seek His face and offer Him gold, incense and myrrh, the gold of devotion, the incense of attention, the myrrh of respectful and manly demeanour."

St. Charles Borromeo attached so much importance to his Office that he always spent at least a quarter of an hour in mental prayer before he ventured to begin, and then said it on his knees [1]; and St. Bonaventure used to tell his novices : "Never begin to say the Office without preparing yourself by a collect and a prayer. We are tepid and slothful in the Divine Office, because we have not roused ourselves beforehand by acts of devotion; hence, as we have entered cold, so do we leave the choir dissipated in heart" [2].

As it is a special grace from God to say the Office well, for we cannot, St. Paul tells us, *Say the Lord Jesus except by the Holy Ghost* [3], we must ask for this grace humbly and fervently. Origen writes : "We must beseech the Lord that the Lamb of the tribe of Juda may come and deign Himself to open the sealed book. For it was He who, opening the Scriptures, set on fire the hearts of the disciples so that they said : *Did not our hearts burn within us while He opened to us the Scriptures ?*" [4]

Now of the preparatory prayer. Our first should be to make acts of the presence of God who abides in our heart if we are in a state of grace. There is nothing that empties the heart more of creatures than the thought that the ever adorable Trinity is really and truly present with us. *If any man love Me. . . . We will come to him and make Our abode with him* [5], says our Divine Master. And St. Paul presses home this truth : *Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost*

[1] Giussano's "Life of St. Charles Borromeo," Eng. ed., vol. i. p. 90; ii. p. 292.

[2] *De Institutione Novitorum.*

[3] 1 Cor. xii. 3.

[4] Migne, P. G., vol. xii. p. 385.

[5] John xiv. 23.

Who is in you? [1] We need not go outside of ourselves to find the Divine Presence. He is within us : *The kingdom of God is within you* [2]. The thought of this Presence brings a hush over our soul. God alone becomes our one object. He and our soul are the two realities which stand out clear and distinct. This act of faith in the Presence of God within us cannot be made without reminding us of our utter unworthiness in His sight. It begets in our soul, therefore, acts of sorrow for our sins. Purified by these we adore Him with our whole soul and put ourselves at the disposal of Jesus our Lord to pay that adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and prayer with which He worships the Divine Majesty. Such acts as these before beginning our Office are the best form of mental prayer. To these may well be joined such vocal prayers as appeal to our own devotion. The shorter the better. The *Aperi Domine* is excellent ; but at times, others may, with advantage, be substituted for it. The hymn to the Holy Ghost, the *Veni Creator*, was often used by St. Francis Xavier before his Office. The prayer said by the deacon at high Mass before singing the Gospel, the *Munda Cor meum* ; or else the prayer before the *Orate Fratres*, the *Suscipe Sancta Trinitas* ; or the Collect, *Deus cui omne cor patet* ; or the *Gloria in Excelsis Deo*. Any of these may be used as our devotion prompts.

We may make up a little list of such vocal prayers for our own use together with short invocations of our Lady, our Guardian Angel, and patrons ; and vary the prayers according to the day of the week, or the feast day. By such pious means we shall avoid that sense of routine which is one of the great difficulties we have to contend against.

We may sometimes add to our mental prayer before the Office considerations upon the excellence of our ministry ; such as that we are the instruments by which Jesus the God-Man worships His Father ; that we are representatives of Holy Church ; that we are placed between the living and the dead to supplicate for all the graces mankind stands in need of ; that we are taking a part in the heavenly worship

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

[2] Luke xviii. 21.

which goes on for ever before the great Throne, and are lending our voices to all creation to praise Him Who sits thereon. With such thoughts as these we shall enter upon our Office with a heart attuned to the work we have to do and we shall get from it the profit that our Lord intends.

CHAPTER III.

ON PARTICULAR INTENTION.

ALTHOUGH we are representatives of the Church we must not forget that when in union with our Lord we deliberately set ourself to do His work of worship, we are doing an act not only good in itself and profitable to all the members of the Body Mystical, but also one full of advantage to ourselves. In other words, we have in the fruit of the Office a special share which is wholly ours. This we can dispose of as we please. From this comes the advantage of having some special intention for which we say either the whole or part of the Office. And, indeed, no better prayer can be used for the special intentions we may have at heart ; for it is the highest of all prayers and is said in the very best circumstances for receiving a favourable answer. Spiritual writers, such as St. Bernard and St. Bonaventure, recommend us not to neglect this practice of making intentions ; for long and frequent prayers expose us to the danger of negligence, and therefore the practice serves to guard our attention.

What intentions should we use ? There are, first, the four intentions of our Lord's Prayer in Heaven and in the Blessed Sacrament : adoration, thanksgiving, atonement, and supplication. We may sometimes say our Office or part of it as a distinct act of adoration to the Eternal God. Prostrated before His throne and abasing ourself in His sight, we confess that He is all and we are nothing ; that all we are and have is from Him ; that He alone is worthy of all honour, all glory, and all worship, *for He hath made us and not we ourselves*. Then there are many occasions when our heart is full of gratitude for some favour which God has given us. Second

to the Mass there is no act of thanksgiving so pleasing to Him as the Office. And have we not much to be grateful for? Our vocation, our sacraments, our graces, our crosses, our joys, our successes, our sorrows, our hopes, our losses; all these are distinct subjects for thanksgiving. What better act of thanksgiving, for instance, than to say Lauds with this intention? Or does the remembrance of former sinfulness oppress us; or are we weighed down with the thought of our own daily unfaithfulness to grace, or of our coldness and want of love in God's service; or are we moved by the shock that comes from some fall more serious than usual? There is an atoning power in the Office said in union with our Lord that is sure to win grace, forgiveness, peace, and purity. Or do we hear of some great scandal and sin, of stars falling from heaven [1], the interests of our Lord disregarded and injured in various parts of the Church? We have a perfect means of making atonement to His dear glory by means of Office. Or are we in want, or do we pray for others? Is it a conversion that we ask, saying as Esther said to the king: *If it please thee give me my life for which I ask and my people for whom I beseech* [2]. Or is it our daily occupation, whatever it may be, that makes us anxious and full of care? Or do we wish to pour forth our prayers for our friends and relations, our community and superiors? We have no better means of helping them than by saying our Office for these particular intentions; for we say it with Jesus, and He is heard *for His reverence* [3]. There is, therefore, no better way than to say our Office, whatever our intentions may be, in union with the Glorious and Eucharistic Life of our Lord and with reference to the ends for which He prays. Thus will our Office be linked on to the Mass and will get its light and life from that adorable Sacrifice, the centre itself of all light and life [4].

[1] Cf. Apoc. viii. 10.

[2] Esther vii. 3.

[3] Heb. v. 7.

[4] The English mystic, Walter Hilton, died 1396 (?), says of the Office: "This prayer is always heard by Jesus. It yieldeth grace unto Jesus and receiveth grace again from Him. It maketh the soul familiar, and, as it were, companion unto Jesus and all the Angels in heaven. Use it whosoever can; the work is good and grace-bestowing in itself. . . . This prayer is a rich offering filled with all the fatness of devotion, received by Angels and presented before the face of Jesus."—*The Scale of Perfection* (ed. 1870), p. 244.

We can say the Office in union with the spirit of the feast which the Church celebrates, to adore God in that particular mystery or saint ; to thank Him for all the graces given through that mystery or saint, or to that saint making him to be what he is ; or offering that mystery or the holiness of the saint in the spirit of atonement, or urging the mystery or the patronage of the saint as an extra plea for our petition. And how our ever-dear and blessed Lady enters into all this can easily be seen. Under all circumstances, when saying her Office we must place our hand in her's and, together with her, approach the Throne of Grace.

It is useful to write in our Office books some general intentions which we should observe, unless any special reason makes us change our plan. As there are seven hours in the Office and seven days in the week, we may make use of these tables, either for a day or for a week, for the Office as a whole, or for each separate hour. The following lists may be altered and changed to suit each one's devotion.

I.—GENERAL INTENTIONS.

(1) The Blessed Trinity : or the Incarnation ; (2) The Holy Angels : or our Guardian Angel ; (3) The Apostles : or our Patron ; (4) St. Joseph : or the Souls in Purgatory ; (5) The Blessed Sacrament : or the Clergy ; (6) The Passion : or all sinners ; (7) Our Blessed Lady : or all religious.

II.—TO HONOUR THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

(1) His wisdom ; (2) His omnipotence ; (3) His goodness ; (4) His providence ; (5) His mercy ; (6) His justice ; (7) His patience.

III.—IN HONOUR OF THE HOLY GHOST.

(1) For the gift of wisdom ; (2) For the gift of understanding ; (3) For the gift of counsel ; (4) For the gift of knowledge ; (5) For the gift of fortitude ; (6) For the gift of piety ; (7) For the gift of fear of the Lord.

IV.—OUR LORD'S LIFE.

(1) Our Lord's Nativity ; (2) His hidden Life ; (3) His public Ministry ; (4) His Passion ; (5) His Death ; (6) His resurrection ; (7) His Ascension.

V.—THE PASSION.

“ At Matins bound, at Prime reviled,
Condemned to death at Terce,
Nailed to the Cross at Sext,
At None His blessed Side they pierced,
They take Him down at Vesper tide,
In grave at Compline lay,
Who henceforth bids His Church observe
These seven-fold hours away.”

VI.—OUR LADY, MIRROR OF JUSTICE.

(1) For knowledge of Mary ; (2) For more love of Mary ; (3) For more confidence in Mary ; (4) For more union with Mary ; (5) For more joy in Mary ; (6) For a larger share in her compassion ; (7) For true devotion to Mary.

VII.—FOR THE CHURCH.

(1) Our Holy Father the Pope ; (2) The cardinals ; (3) The bishops ; (4) Our diocese ; (5) The clergy ; (6) missionaries ; (7) religious.

VIII.—THE CHURCH'S INTERESTS.

(1) For good pastors ; (2) For the persecuted ; (3) For unbelievers ; (4) For bad Catholics ; (5) For the conversion of sinners ; (6) For foreign missions ; (7) For our schools and children.

IX.—FOR THE HOLY SOULS.

(1) For the most desolate soul ; (2) For the soul nearest to its release ; (3) For the souls suffering through our sins ; (4) For the souls of our parents, friends and benefactors ; (5) For the soul that has to remain longest in purgatory ; (6) For the soul most devout to the Passion ; (7) For the soul most devout to our Lady.

X.—FOR THE VIRTUES.

(1) Humility ; (2) Liberality ; (3) Chastity ; (4) Mildness ; (5) Charity ; (6) Brotherly love ; (7) Diligence.

XI.—AGAINST SINS OF

(1) Pride ; (2) Covetousness ; (3) Lust ; (4) Anger ; (5) Hatred ; (6) Envy ; (7) Sloth.

XII.—FOR OUR WORK.

(1) That it may be to God's Glory ; (2) That it may be done thoroughly ; (3) That it may be blest ; (4) That it may benefit others ; (5) That it may keep us humble ; (6) That it may be done in the spirit of penance ; (7) That it may be done in the Divine Presence.

Other tables we can make use of are the following taken mostly from FF. Mayer and Drexel, S.J.

I.

(1) *On Sunday, or Matins any day*—(i.) For the whole church ; or (ii.) the clergy ; or (iii.) our own community.

(2) *On Monday or at Prime*—(i.) For the conversion of infidels ; or (ii.) forgiveness of sins ; or (iii.) a generous, cheerful spirit.

(3) *On Tuesday or at Terce*—(i.) For the conversion of unbelievers ; or (ii.) true mortification ; or (iii.) grace of the Holy Ghost.

(4) *On Wednesday or at Sext*—(i.) For all in mortal sin ; or (ii.) the spread of Christ's kingdom ; or (iii.) grace to be faithful.

(5) *On Thursday or at None*—(i.) For the perseverance of good ; or (2) grace to be heavenly-minded ; or (iii.) increase of faith in the Blessed Sacrament.

(6) *On Friday or at Vespers*—(i.) For parents, relations, benefactors, friends and enemies ; or (ii.) grace of prayer ; or (iii.) love of the cross.

(7) *On Saturday or at Compline* — (i.) For the faithful departed ; or (ii.) for peace ; or (iii.) for perfect charity.

II.

Matins may be said in commemoration of (1) the Nativity ; (2) the Betrayal in the Garden ; (3) the Last Judgment [1].

Lauds in commemoration of the Resurrection.

Prime in commemoration of the Leading to Pilate.

Terce in commemoration of (1) the Crowning with Thorns ; (2) the Scourging ; (3) the Coming of the Holy Ghost.

Sext in commemoration of (1) the Fall of Man [2] ; (2) the Crucifixion ; (3) The Calling of the Gentiles [3].

None in commemoration of (1) the Death of Christ ; (2) the Binding of Satan.

Vespers in commemoration of (1) the Burial of our Lord ; (2) the Giving of the Holy Ghost [4].

Compline in commemoration of (1) the Institution of the Eucharist ; (2) Eternal Rest in Paradise.

III.

Matins, in honour of Our Lord before the high priest : for the conversion of those in mortal sin.

Lauds, in honour of Our Lord in prison : for all enemies and persecutors.

Prime, in honour of the Scourging : for pardon of one's own sins ; for the virtue most needed.

Terce, in honour of the Crowning with Thorns : for all Christian states and rulers.

Sext, in honour of the Crucifixion : for all afflicted and in sorrow.

None, in honour of the Death of our Lord : for all in their last agony.

Vespers, in honour of the Mother of Sorrows : for all that have died to-day.

Compline, in honour of all Saints : for final pre-severance.

But as "all your service is of our blessed Lady ; therefore it is good that ye intend specially therein her praising and worship, and that God be thanked and praised for all the gifts

[1] 1 Thess. v. 2.

[2] Gen. iii. 8.

[3] Acts x. 9.

[4] John xx. 19, 23.

and benefits that He hath given to her and by her to all mankind "[1]. So we can say our hours in honour of her Seven Joys : (1) The Annunciation ; (2) the Nativity ; (3) the Adoration of the Magi ; (4) the Finding after the Three Days' Loss ; (5) the Resurrection ; (6) the Ascension ; (7) the Assumption.

Or at times her Seven Dolours will appeal to our devotion, and we can say our hours in honour of (1) Simeon's prophecy ; (2) the Flight into Egypt ; (3) the Three Day's Loss ; (4) the Meeting on the Way to Calvary ; (5) the Crucifixion ; (6) the Taking Down from the Cross ; (7) the Entombment.

Or at other times her Seven-fold Glory attracts us and we say the hours in honour of (1) her Stainless Conception ; (2) the Annunciation ; (3) her Maiden-Motherhood ; (4) the Thirty Year's Life at Nazareth ; (5) our Lord's first Miracle ; (6) her Sanctification at Pentecost ; (7) her Coronation in Heaven.

It is a good practice to have a series of these intentions drawn up by week or by day, so that as each time comes round we have something new to honour, something new to ask. But we must be most careful not to let them degenerate into mechanical aids and allow ourselves to think that once having written them down, all is done. We are intelligent beings and not machines ; and we must act by reason and not by clockwork. Helps of the kind we have suggested are only useful when used intelligently ; otherwise they become superstitious, and hinder the influence of God upon the soul.

I will conclude this chapter by some more words from the *Myroure of Our Lady* : "It is also profitable that you intend in saying of this holy service the fulfilling of your bond and duty inasmuch as you are bound thereto by your rule and by your holy profession" [2]. This injunction need not lead to scruples. We always say our Office because it is our duty. The mere fact of saying it is the fulfilment of a duty ; so the taking up the book to read it out of and the very act of recitation imply that we are doing it to fulfil our obligation [3].

[1] *Myroure*, p. 61.

[2] p. 61.

[3] Scruples on this head can be easily removed by the question—Why did I say my Office? Out of mere pleasure or duty, or *because I have to say it?*

Our pious author goes on : "And as the prayer of these holy hours is rather sped and heard of our Lord than other prayers, as I said before, therefore it is good that, in the saying or singing thereof, ye intend to get the forgiveness of your own sins and such help and graces and virtues as you feel needful to you and also to the health and profit of all that you are bound or have devotion to pray for. And the more specially and often that you offer up these intentions to God with meek and fervent desire in Him, the better profit shall you have of that thing that you desire and pray for. Nevertheless you ought to dress your hearts after these intentions before you begin, for in time of this holy service you ought to stable your mind only on God and upon none other things, as I have said before" [1].

CHAPTER IV.

ON ATTENTION.

“IN order to perform the Office it is not necessary to have in mind the precise sense of the prayers we say. The texts are sometimes difficult, and the attention is not always under our control. Besides, the mind may legitimately exercise itself upon other suitable objects. Yet, speaking generally, we cannot pay too great attention to the sense of the words : *Whoso readeth let him understand* [1]. This is most natural, and is conformable to the mind of the Church, and to the example of the saints. In fact, when we address ourself to God and bless Him, or when we utter certain forms of prayer, it is only natural to attend to the words we pronounce and join to the letter the thoughts and affections it expresses. To neglect this source of inspiration and seek elsewhere for ideas does a kind of violence to our mind by laying on it a double, needless labour, and making it well nigh impossible to do either in a proper manner. Again, by so doing we lower the dignity of the Office and misunderstand its aim. For the Church has only given us this book for some wise purpose ; and what end can she have in putting her words on our lips except to put her thoughts into our mind and her feelings into our hearts ? ” [2]

The example of the saints is clear upon this point ; they do not seem to understand any meaning between strict mental application to the words and distraction. St. Bernard tells his monks : “During the psalmody think of nothing else but what the psalmody suggests ” [3]. St. Bonaventure says :

[1] Matth. xxiv. 15.

[2] Bacquez, pp. 206-207.

[3] Migne, P. L., vol. clxxxiii. p. 1011.

"As far as possible say no word without attention and understanding it" [1]. St. Theresa, always so practical and full of common-sense, gives the same advice: "When I say *I believe*, it is proper, methinks, that I should understand what I believe; and when I say *Our Father*, love requires I should understand who this *Our Father* is" [2].

Now attention may be verbal or mental: that is, directed to the words we pronounce or to the thoughts they express. On the point of verbal exactitude, then, let us hear the author of the *Myroure*: "And as it is so great peril to leave aught of this holy Service, as is before said, therefore all that are bound thereto ought not only to ascertain their heart to have their mind thereon, but also to use their tongue to say it, suitably and distinctly, without failing or over-skipping of word or syllable. For like as a good harper smiteth all the strings on his harp each in his own kind, and if he smote the first and the last, or if he smote recklessly over all at once, he should make no good melody, right so God's service is likened to the song of a harp as the prophet saith: *Psallite Domino in cithara*—that is, Sing to God on the harp [3]. And therefore in this harp of our Lord's service ye ought to smite all the strings, that is to say, all the words and syllables, each in his kind and in his place, and not hurry them out together as though you would say them all at once. For the praising of God in His Church ought to accord to His praising in heaven, whereof St. John in the Apocalypse after he had heard it, he said thus: *Et vocem quam audivi sicut citharædorum citharizantium in citharis suis*—that is, The voice that I heard in heaven was (as) the voice of harpers harping on their harps [4]. Therefore, when Aaron by our Lord's commandment offered a calf upon the altar, he cut it up into pieces and then offered it up with the head and with each member thereof. By this calf is understood the source of our Lord's praising which is more acceptable to Him than the offering of any calf, as the prophet saith: *Laudabo nomen Dei cum cantico et magnificabo Eum in laude*.

[1] Reg. Novit.

[2] Way of Perfection (ed. 1852), p. 118.

[3] Ps. xcvi. 5.

[4] Apoc. xiv. 2.

Et placebit Deo super vitulum novellum; that is, I will praise the name of God with song, and I will make much of Him in praising; and it will please God more than the offering of any young calf [1]. But when this calf of our Lord's praising is offered it must be cut into pieces; for all the words and syllables ought to be said distinctly from the beginning unto the end in each member and in each part thereof. For like as clippers or falsifiers of the king's money are punished by death, even so they that clip away from the money of God's service any word or letters or syllables, and so falsify it from the true sentence, or from the true manner of saying thereof, deserve to be grievously punished against God.

"And therefore the fiend sendeth readily his messengers to gather all such negligences together and to keep them in accusation of the soul, as we read of a holy abbat of the order of the Cistercians, the while he stood in the choir at matins he saw a fiend that had a long and a great bag hanging about his neck, and [who] went about the choir from one to another, and waited busily after all letters and syllables and words and failings that any made, and them he gathered diligently and put them into his bag. And when he came before the abbat, waiting if aught had escaped him, that he might have gotten and put into his bag, the abbat was astonished and afeard of the foulness and misshape of him, and said unto him: 'What art thou?' and he answered and said: 'I am a poor devil and my name is Titivillus and I do mine office that is committed unto me.' 'And what is thine office?' said the abbat; he answered, 'I must each day,' he said, 'bring my master a thousand bags full of failings, and of negligences in syllables and words that are done in your order in reading and singing, or else I must be sore beaten'" [2].

This quaint story of the "poor devil Titivillus" at any rate will serve to remind us that, if at the Last Day we shall have to give an account of every idle word we have said, we surely shall have to account for, as worse than idle words, all careless recitation of the Office. We must be on our guard against "clipping the money of God's service." This,

[1] Ps. lxxviii. 35.

[2] *Myroure*, pp. 52-54.

again, need not generate scruples. All that is required is that we should give to the verbal recitation that ordinary amount of care and exactness we use in any important matter of our daily life. St. Francis of Assisi used to punish himself very rigorously for the least voluntary distractions; and St. Joseph of Cupertino, whenever he found himself drifting into carelessness, repeated the verse. These were not cases of scruple; but of a stern purpose which aimed at bringing the mind into obedience according to the words of the Apostle: *Bringing into captivity every understanding unto the obedience of Christ* [1].

It is useful to recognise the cause of our faults from the beginning; the remedy then is easy. Now the faults that beset us come chiefly from a desire to hurry over the Office. "Dissipation of mind, routine, the desire for liberty, preoccupation, and above all that restless activity which hinders us from fixing our thoughts upon anything whatever and makes us always long after some new object, all these go to make the 'Office' time inconvenient and to shorten it. To recite the Office with suitable gravity and attention we must love it and know its attractions; and to love and relish it we must have the spirit of prayer, of self-recollection and fervour. Anything which tends to weaken this spirit tends also to lessen our love for the Office and makes us hurry over it. . . . There is no fault more common and none more fatal, nor in its effects more difficult to cure than hurry. 'Haste is the destroyer of devotion' says St. Francis de Sales. If we allow ourselves to get into the habit, the interior spirit, which is the source of all merit, becomes dried up; and instead of the highest use of our intellect, there is only a lip-worship, and holy thoughts and noble feelings are replaced by a blind and mechanical repetition. Once a slave to this habit, it is vain to multiply words of prayer. . . . The words that rise to our lips mean nothing to our heart and leave no impression on our soul. They are nothing but a useless set of words like those for which our Lord blamed the heathen: *When ye pray, speak not much as do the heathen, for they think in their much speaking they may be heard* [2]. . . . To reduce the

[1] 2 Cor. x. 5.

[2] St. Matth. vi. 7.

highest function to a purely mechanical exercise, to turn to harm what was meant to preserve and develop both prayer and piety, cannot be indifferent and without reproach in God's eyes. Let the awful imprecation of God warn us: *Let his prayer become sin*; and let us heed the woeful punishment foretold by the psalmist: *Let the labour of their own lips cover them, let burning coals fall upon them*" [1].

If the cause of hurry is the whirl of many kinds of occupations which nowadays is heaped up upon us (as though our salvation depended upon the amount we do, and not how we do it!) the remedy is very easy. The Office is of obligation, private prayers and special devotions are not. Rather than say the Office badly, for hurried saying is bad saying, omit or shorten every other private devotion and give the time thus gained to the Office. It is most important that we should realise that the devout saying of the public prayer is much more useful to the Church than all the rosaries, meditations, litanies, and novenas of private devotions. St. Bonaventure tells us it is an illusion to think that we can compensate by our private devotions for voluntary defects in the prayer the Church imposes on us. If we say our Office properly we have mental prayer in a most perfect form and a vocal prayer we can apply to every intention.

But looking at the question from the point of time, what is gained by a haste so unbecoming? "Some short moments in an hour; ten minutes at most on the day's Office. Does it compensate—I do not say for the fault we commit, for the merit of which we deprive ourself, for the scandal we cause, or for the punishment we incur—but for the happiness we can feel in so sweet and consoling an exercise? Is it reasonable for so small a gain to dry up in our heart the fountain head of grace and make the most precious hour of the day unfruitful, wearisome and painful?" [2]

The example of the saints is to the point. St. Alphonsus made a special vow never to lose time; yet he never hurried over his Office. He carried out what he recommended to others, viz., to say it with calmness, attention, and respect.

[1] Ps. cviii. 7; cxxxix. 10; Bacquez, 230.

[2] Bacquez, p. 234.

St. Francis Xavier, too, although a whole world lay before him to convert, never hurried over the Office; he even added special prayers to obtain the grace to say it well.

The Office should not be made a burthen. I do not advocate the slow and measured recitation used by some of the contemplative orders. This would not sort well with the active life. The recitation should be grave, and so justly measured, that the sense of the verse and the meaning of the words can have a chance to penetrate our heart. When the Office is made, as St. Benedict calls it, "the Work of God," and nothing is preferred before it, then the times of Choir are the happiest hours in the day. They are all too short for the sweetness we can gain in the sacred psalmody. And shall we sacrifice this by wasting our time upon other works which are not so necessary or profitable?

One remedy against hurrying is that followed by such great saints of God, and such busy men, as St. Charles Borromeo, St. Philip Neri, and St. Vincent de Paul. They never said any part of the Office by heart, but read line by line even the psalms and prayers they knew best. This practice, although it may not suit all persons, is useful to those who are overburdened with exterior work; "For by this means the words, striking the eye and the ear at the same time, are less exposed to pass unperceived, and the care taken to discover the word we pronounce is one more safeguard against the tendency to routine" [1].

But attention is not confined to mere verbal accuracy. Words are only the outward clothing of the thought. A machine, such as the phonograph, can produce the mechanical effect of words, but it cannot think. We are not machines; our mind has to go with our voice. St. Benedict says: "Let the mind concord with the voice" [2]; and the Psalmist adds: *To Thee hath my heart said* [3]. Our heart must speak to God if we would be heard. Therefore let the Psalmist lead you: "If he pray, pray with him, if he sigh, sigh ye also; and if he rejoice, joy ye too; should he express hope, fill your heart with trust; or if fear pervades him, tremble.

[1] Bacquez, p. 239.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. lxvi. p. 476.

[3] Ps. xxvi. 8.

For all things what are written here are as a miroir for us" [1]. Thus says St. Augustine :—

"Let it not be objected that the words of the Office are not our own, that the Psalms were not composed for us, that they suppose thoughts, circumstances, and dispositions that are not ours. For the Office has been compiled for us. The Psalms (we repeat it again) have Jesus, the Incarnate God, not David, as their first and principal object. What they express is not the mind of any one man in particular, but the mind of all Christians considered in Him Who is their divine Head. The feelings contained in the Psalms are those which were wrought first in the soul of our Lord by the Holy Ghost, and then through Him in all those who are members of His Mystical Body. Therefore they are ours as well as David's, or any of the saints. So it was for us the Psalms were written. The Holy Ghost had us in view when He inspired them. He speaks of our perils, of our warfare; He mourns over our sins; and in true and touching words, He speaks of our repentance, our hope, our zeal, our gratitude and our love. For, according to St. Paul: *All things are yours; but ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's*" [2] [3].

[1] Migne, P. L., vol. xxxvi. p. 248.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 22.

[3] Bacquez, pp. 209-210.

CHAPTER V.

ON SOME AIDS TO ATTENTION.

NO matter how careful we may be at the beginning of the Office to fix our attention and secure our wandering thoughts, we soon find, in spite of all precautions, that we become distracted and our fervour dwindles away. Holy Church, as far as she could, has tried to remedy this by weaving her Office out of Psalm, Antiphon, Hymn, Versicle, Lessons, and Prayers, in order to give variety. She, moreover, orders that at one time we should sit, at another, stand, or kneel, or bow, or cross ourselves. This variety of posture is one of the practical advantages that saying Office in Choir has above private recitation. But as these means fail when we say our Office by ourselves, we want others to help the infirmity of our minds.

A great means, and I am speaking now of private recitation, is to be careful of the place in which we say the prayer. There is no place where God cannot be found ; but there are places where He is to be found more easily. *The Lord is in His holy Temple : The Lord's throne is in heaven* [1]. But we have already spoken of this in a preceding chapter.

Wherever we say our Office there is one thing we can always control—unless sickness or something exceptional makes it impossible—and that is our attitude. But there are few things about which we feel less scruple or so easily listen to excuses. And how glibly we quote to ourselves St. Theresa's saying that one of the conditions favourable to a good prayer is a comfortable position ! Now, what the saint means is that a physically uncomfortable position will naturally direct our

mind to the pain we feel [1]; and, therefore, a position free from these inconveniences should be secured before beginning to pray. She did not mean that sofas or armchairs are the best places for prayer, unless it is God's will we should occupy them.

Sancta sancte: Holy things should be done in a holy manner. Our body, as well as our soul, has to give its meed of service to God. Our Divine Master gives us the example of a reverent posture in prayer. The Evangelists tell us: *He raised His eyes to heaven* [2]; *He prostrated on the ground* [3]; *And kneeling down He prayed* [4]. And such of His servants as St. Vincent Ferrier, St. Charles, St. Vincent de Paul, St. Francis de Sales, the Venerable Curé d'Ars, said their Office on their knees. St. Paul of the Cross always said his Office bare-headed; and one of the successors of St. Francis de Sales, Mgr. de Bernex, used, at the end of his prayer, to prostrate himself and kiss the ground out of piety and humility. M. Bacquez states that the late Pope, Pius IX., used to say all the Divine Office kneeling without any support.

But if we are not able to kneel for any length of time, and have to change our position, we can always adopt one that is reverent and recalls to our mind that we are speaking with God. To get this, the real truth about the Office, well into our mind, is a sure means of securing reverence, no matter what position we are obliged to take up; for where the heart is regulated there the body will correspond.

As to the proper time for prayer, God is always ready to hear us. However, as the Church has fixed seven hours for prayers, the Office, *as far as possible*, should be said either at these hours, or as near to them as possible. Happy he who can (and how few there are who cannot if they would!) snatch a few minutes every three hours to take part in the prayer fixed for that hour. Custom has, however, sanctioned a division into three parts. The three parts are—Matins

[1] The unwise, I would almost say wicked, practice of giving as a penance certain prayers to be said *kneeling on the hands*, or in some other hard position, can only be tolerated by those who do not know what prayer is. Under such circumstances it is impossible to pray well, and what is said degenerates into a superstitious gabble.

[2] John xvii. 1.

[3] Mark xiv. 35.

[4] Luke xxii. 41.

and Lauds said over night, the Little Hours in the morning, and Vespers and Compline in the evening or afternoon. The objection to this is, that it makes a night prayer of Lauds, and thus loses sight of the fact that it is the original morning prayer of the Church. We would therefore suggest—as a better division—Matins over night, Lauds, Prime, Terce, and Sext in the morning; Nones, Vespers and Compline in the evening. Compline might be said before Matins, with only a short interval for mental prayer.

But when we foresee a day before us fuller of engagements and occupations than usual, it will always be well to get *all* our Office said at once in the early morning so as to secure “that nothing be preferred to the work of God.” The Office must be our first care. An old writer says: “To pray before the time is *providence*; at the fixed time *obedience*; but to postpone it is *negligence*.”

“Is it useful to have a companion and say the Office aloud and alternately?” asks M. Bacquez. And he thus replies: “It is good sometimes, to use this method, in order to prevent the bad effects of habit and to stir up our fervour. If true piety is present, each one is excited and edified like the seraphim of whom Isaias speaks. The more they conform to the usages of the Choir, the less difficulty also will they have in entering into the spirit of the Office” [1].

Another useful way of guarding our attention is to mark in our books some fixed places, such as certain verses or words. These will serve as signals to recall our soul if wandering. For instance at the *Gloria Patri*, St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi told one of her sisters that she had been taught by her confessor to make offering of her life to the Holy Trinity whenever she bowed her head at these words: “As though I were presenting my head to the executioner to undergo martyrdom.” The blessed Jordan, the second general of the Dominicans, used at these words to implore in a special manner the blessing of the Most Holy Trinity. Once at Matins, when the Invitatory was being sung he saw our ever-dear and blessed Lady coming down from heaven and bearing

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 225.

in her arms her Son. A throne was set up for them by the Angels. During the *Venite*, our Lord and His blissful Mother regarded the friars with great benignity, and whilst they were bowing at the words *Gloria Patri* the holy man saw God's Mother take the tiny hand of her Son and make the sign of the cross over the brethren.

The word *Oremus* is a direct invitation to recollection ; the *Per Dominum nostrum*, with which so many prayers end, recall our union with Jesus Christ ; the *Amen*, a word so often used, and its meaning so little realised ; these and others, at choice, are some of the obvious places at which we can regain our attention. Then some verse or some particular word sheds one day a special light into our soul. This should be marked to recall the light we have had. Two of those great spiritual writers in which the French Church has been so prolific, Cardinal Bérulle and Père de Condren, tell us that when saying the Office alone we are to remember that we do not interrupt or distract ourself if we pause at some particular passage which there and then affects us. We rather are obeying Holy Writ, which tells us to meditate day and night upon the Word of God and to find in it all the light we require. The Holy Ghost has a message to give us, and we must listen to it. How can we listen to His voice if we are always speaking ?

CHAPTER VI.

ON DISTRACTIONS.

DISTRACTIONS are the bane of prayer. Timid, scrupulous souls often find them the destruction of all sweetness and peace. In their case distractions change the light and sweet burthen of the Office, into a daily weight and a painful yoke. Now as a matter of fact, common sense tells us that this is unreasonable. We must look at facts as they are, not as we should like them to be. We often lose sight of this important truth : God has not made us angels but human beings, with all the weaknesses, not only of our nature, but of our *fallen* nature, which is prone to evil from our childhood, often seeing the good, yet not doing it, as St. Paul says [1]. The work of sanctification consists in aiming at being good men and women, not at making ourselves an indifferent sort of angels ! Sanctification is *to put on the Lord Jesus* [2] ; to form His image in our heart [3]. We must not strive after a perfection which, in God's providence, is not destined for men and women. We must not try to root out the nature which God has given us. The whole work consists in raising ourself up to the standard towards which He leads us. The work is not one so much of repression as of education, that is, of bringing out the details of the image of God given to us in Baptism, or, in other words, of developing our good qualities. This will do away with bad qualities. A gardener who sets his heart upon a bed full of choice flowers, is, of course, careful to keep down weeds and noxious insects. But his endeavour is not so much to destroy these as to cultivate the other. So it is in the spiritual life. The positive view, that is, the cultivation of

[1] Cf. Romans vii. 19.

[2] *Ibid.* xiii. 14.[3] Cf. *ibid.* viii. 29.

virtue, is the point; the negative aspect, the repression of vice, is a secondary result which follows naturally from the first. Any other view sets all spirituality topsy-turvy; and is, as far as we are concerned, unreasonable and doomed to end in failure. Now, to continue the simile. The gardener who spends his time and labour in producing rare, choice flowers, may see that in spite of all his care weeds make their appearance along with the flowers. As a matter of fact, he never can get rid of them entirely; the very richness of the soil he cultivates with so much care conduces to their growth. But he knows that even weeds have a use of their own. Nature never works without reason. So, although he is careful to prevent them from draining and impoverishing the soil, yet their presence, if kept in check, does not alarm him; for, when killed, they add to the richness of the ground.

Now what has all this to do with distractions? A good deal; for in the garden we have a picture of our soul. The flower of prayer is what we are trying to cultivate; distractions are the weeds. The sensible plan is to follow the example of the gardener who, while keeping them under check, realises that they are not without their use.

What does distraction mean? It is "a drawing away" of the mind from the object upon which our attention is fixed. Whence come distractions? Principally from the very weakness of our human nature, which God made and which He knows is weak. We are so constituted that application, steady and prolonged, is both hard and painful to us. We need frequent change. This, by the way, is a proof that no created thing can satisfy us. How many of us can for five minutes concentrate attention upon any one subject, and not find our mind working out sideways and, perhaps half unconsciously, following other trains of thought beside the one we desire? The work of attention, we make bold to say, can never be perfect in this life; for while, say, our eyes are fixed upon a book, our other senses, which like the eyes are avenues to the soul, are open and receptive of outside influence. Even if we do succeed in a measure (and it can only be attained by dint of stern will and downright hard, persevering work) in obtaining concentration of the

mind for some time, fatigue and weariness follow. This shows that perfect attention (the absence of distraction) is something beyond our present human nature, which revolts, according to its own laws, against being driven to attempt what is above its ordinary power.

Hence, in prayer, there are distractions which are purely natural, and it is vain to hope to be ever free from them. It is not God's will that we should be free. But if these distractions, which come to us without any fault on our part, are deliberately entertained, that is to say, if we follow them with our mind wide awake, realising, then and there, the fact that we are not attending to our prayers, then, and only then, do they become harmful to our souls. They must be entertained deliberately before they become sinful. And the sinfulness consists in this: when we are distracted wilfully (and every reasonable person can know whether distractions are wilful or not) we are mocking God by giving Him only a lip-worship, while our heart is far away from Him. This is a pretence and dishonours His attribute of Truth. We pretend to pray and are not praying.

From what has been said it will be seen that wilful distraction is a deliberate undoing of the attitude of the mind towards God in prayer. Prayer is the lifting up of our heart and mind to God; Distraction is the drawing away of our heart and mind from God. The sinfulness, we must notice, consists in the wilfulness which consents to the distraction, not in the weakness of our nature which causes it. Going back, for a moment, to what we have said about Prayer itself, it is an attitude towards God, a basking in the sunshine of His presence. Therefore, as long as we do not wilfully withdraw ourselves from His presence, or from His sunshine, we remain in a state of prayer. The easiest cure for distractions, when we realise them, is to renew our act of Faith in God's presence. So, then, common sense teaches us the following conclusions about distractions:—

(1) We must do our best to avoid the occasions of distractions. In the preceding chapters we have certain means suggested for this end.

(2) We must have more confidence, and take a larger view

of the subject. God is a loving Father ; He is not a task-master, always on the look-out and laying traps to catch us tripping. Let our heart be guided by reason, and we shall know that there is little chance of us offending God by real distractions. For why do we pray ? What is our very object in saying the Office ? To please Him. We do not wish to displease Him. Therefore distractions that occur, and which are not wilfully entertained, do not displease Him, and do not rob our prayer of its value in His sight. M. Bacquez says : " It depends entirely upon ourself to avoid them ; if our will falters, our conscience will warn us. There is no reason for being uneasy about distractions which are not voluntary. He who lives a pious life and adopts the ordinary precautions, may live in peace ; and whilst deploring the instability of his mind, and seeking perfect recollection [as far as he can], he should see in the wandering of his mind only a natural defect, or the result of the occupations which are lawful to his state of life " [1].

(3) There are some who fancy there must be in themselves some fault to cause the multitude of distractions which torment them so persistently. But this is an error, as we have pointed out above. Common sense and experience tells us this. St. Teresa wrote to her director that she was as much distracted as he was doing the Office, but she tried to think it came from the weakness of her head. And she added this comfortable thought, that Our Lord knows that when we perform this duty we wish to do it with all possible attention. When one comes to look at it, there is nothing surprising in distractions during prayer. What is really surprising is, that, being what we are, we can ever attain to recollection for even a few moments.

(4) " It is true that exercise of mind increases its instability, and that many of our distractions are concerned about our ordinary occupations, and may therefore seem to be occasioned by them. Doubtless they are ; but does it follow that we are responsible for them, or that they can be imputed to us as a fault ? By no means [2]. These volun-

[1] P. 571.

[2] Bacquez, p. 573.

tary occupations which cause the distractions are either lawful or unlawful; and we are only bound to put away those occupations which are unlawful. The question of distractions is not bound up, then, with the lawfulness or unlawfulness of the occupation, but of the consent we give to the distraction. We cannot expect one who, by following God's will, is immersed in the cares of life and in the petty details of everyday administration, to come to the Office with the recollection of a Carthusian or a Trappist. But because we cannot attain to their recollection, there is no reason why we should abandon the work God has given us. To give way to such ideas is to go against His will, by aiming at a perfection which is not meant for us. Take to heart these golden words of St. Thomas: 'He can be said to pray in spirit, and in truth, who approaches prayer at the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; even if, on account of some infirmity, the mind afterwards wanders. . . . A wandering mind which is not voluntary does not take away the fruit of prayer,' [1].

(5) To fear whether distractions are voluntary or not, is altogether foolish. Reason is given us as a guide. If we ask simply, it will tell us plainly whether we have given consent or no. It is a question of plain, common fact, and admits of a plain, common answer. From this we can draw an important rule of conduct.

We must never repeat any part of our Office on account of these unreasonable fears. Unless we know for certain that we have failed there is no failure on our part, and therefore there is no necessity for repeating anything. Conscience is the heaven-appointed director for all practical questions. St. Francis de Sales is, as usual, matter-of-fact. Suppose, says he, that at the end of the psalm you are not quite sure whether, on account of distraction, you have said it or not; well now, don't trouble yourself about it. Because a distraction has lasted for a long time we must not always conclude that it is the result of our own negligence. *Such a state of things might last all through the Office without any fault on our part* [2]. The Church does not require us to repeat

[1] Migne, P. L., vol. ii. p. 637.

[2] Cf., Entretien, 18.

what we fear may not have been said as might be. Prudence forbids such a repetition. It is a bad habit to repeat the Office ; and those who give way to this failing will soon find it impossible to say it with satisfaction. Thus what ought to be a comfort becomes only a subject of trouble and disgust.

(6) We said that weeds are not without their use, and that a wise gardener can get profit even from them. So it is with distractions. If we use them properly, they will do us two good turns. Firstly, they will make us humble and force us to recognise that the Gift of Prayer is a great grace, and that we must guard it carefully. Secondly, by resisting these distractions, when we become fully aware of them, they turn to so much occasions of merit.

(7) The great ornament of the French Church in the sixteenth Century, Bossuet, the Eagle of Meaux, writes : " It is not necessary to bind our mind to the Breviary or to give more attention to it than to Masses of obligation. We should not hurry ; but putting away all scruples, set to work fairly, cheerfully and simply as in other prayers" [1].

(8) As to the preparation and dispositions for saying Office given in this and other books, we must be careful to distinguish between counsel and command. We can approve of what is good without being obliged to follow it. " We should aspire to perfection ; but we must not feel disquieted if we find ourselves still far from reaching it" [2]. After all, perfection is a relative term, and though star differs from star in glory, yet each is perfect in its own way. Then, as a matter of fact, we shall never reach even our own degree of perfection except through the gates of Purgatory.

(9) And lastly. The Office being an institution of the Church, we are always certain to fulfil our obligation properly when we set about it in the way She approves. The example, I do not say of the saints, but of our fellow-men whom we recognise to be in earnest in serving God, and who try to find their delight in prayer, will be sufficient for us to imitate, without worrying ourselves any more. Conscience will soon tell us whether we are fulfilling our duty in a reasonable manner ; and by Conscience we stand or fall in God's sight.

[1] *Lettres de Piété et de Direction*, N. 148.

[2] Bacquez, p. 576.

PART III.—EXEGETICAL.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATORY PRAYER.

A Prayer to be said for the Office.

Aperi, Dómine, os meum ad benedicéndum nomen sanctum tuum : munda quoque cor meum ab ómnibus vanis, perversis, et aliénis cogitationibus : intelléctum illúmina, afféctum inflámma : ut digne, atténte ac devóte hoc Officium recitáre váleam, et exaudíri, mérear ante conspéctum divínæ majestátis tuæ. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. R̃. Amen.

Dómine, in unióne illius divínæ intentiónis, qua Ipse in terris laudes Deo persolvísti, has Tibi Horas persólvo.

Open, O Lord, my mouth that I may bless Thy Holy Name : cleanse my heart from all vain, perverse, and hurtful thoughts : enlighten mine understanding, kindle mine affections, that I may say this Office worthily, attentively, and devoutly, and merit to be heard before the Presence of Thy Divine Majesty. Through the Christ our Lord. R̃. Amen.

Lord, in union with that Divine Intention wherewith Thou Thyself, whilst on earth, didst pay praises to God, I pay these Hours to Thee.

(1) This prayer is not of obligation ; but it is useful for it reminds us of the dispositions we should have in our hearts when saying Office.

(2) *Open, O Lord, my mouth.*—We cannot do anything towards our salvation without the help of God. We cannot even pray to any purpose without His Grace. We are

before Him as the dumb child in the Gospel [1], or as Jeremias when the word of the Lord came to him. *A, A, A, Lord God ! behold I cannot speak ; for I am a child* [2]. He opens our mouth by giving us grace to praise Him as He desires. Our mouth is the instrument wherewith the Divine Head of the Church worships the Father in our name ; according to the word of Isaïas : *I have put My words in thy mouth and I have covered thee in the shadow of My hands* [3].

(3) *Cleanse my heart.*—For out of the heart, our Lord tells us, *proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies* [4]. Having, then, been the seat of all iniquities it must be cleansed by contrition, before being filled with the feelings and intentions of our Lord.

(4) *From vain, perverse, and hurtful thoughts.*—These are the three kinds of thoughts that spoil prayer. *Vain* thoughts, as the word implies, mean *empty* thoughts. At all times, but specially in prayer, our heart ought to be filled with thoughts of God. *Perverse* thoughts are those which are “turned away” from their proper object. *Hurtful* thoughts are such as are unfitting to the time, place and object of our prayer.

(5) *Enlighten mine understanding.*—Four of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, to wit : Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Knowledge, are given us for the perfection of our intellect by knowing the things of God. They shed upon the soul a light which sin, if mortal, quenches, or if venial, dims. This is a prayer for a good use of these four gifts which are always in our soul when we are in a state of grace.

(6) *Kindle mine affection.*—That is, stir up my cold heart to will the things which my Reason, enlightened by the Four Gifts, tells me are right and fitting. To move the will is a special work of the Holy Ghost, who gives us another Three Gifts for the very purpose, viz., Fortitude, Piety, and the Fear of the Lord. The word “kindle” suggests the idea of a fire. It is the same thought that we have in the hymn *Veni sancte spiritus*, “Warm with Thy fire our hearts of snow.”

[1] St. Mark ix. 7.

[2] Jer. i. 6.

[3] *Ibid.* li. 16

[4] Matt. xv. 19.

The love of God, which is the perfect operation of our will, is a fire that burns out all sin. We cannot have to do with God without becoming better or worse; more on fire with His love, or colder: *For He is like a refiner's fire* [1]. "Death to the wicked, Life to the good," as St. Thomas sings in the *Lauda Sion*. So we pray that our heart may burn within us, and that our will may be powerfully moved by the Three Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

(7) *That I may say this Office*.—Let these words remind us that we have to *put on the Lord Jesus Christ* [2] when we begin to praise God in our Office, for all the merit and power of the Church's Prayer comes from the fact that it is said in union with the Incarnate Word.

(8) *Worthily, attentively, and devoutly*.—The three conditions of public prayer are: That we should be worthy to appear as representatives of the Church, that is, free from sin; that we should attend to the nature of our prayers; and that we should be devout, that is, acting in accordance with the will of Him Who uses us.

(9) *That I may merit to be heard*.—Speaking in the name of Jesus and in His very Person, we merit to be heard as He was for *His reverence* [3].

(10) *Through the Christ*.—The definite article has been inserted here to call attention to a point which is often overlooked. *Christ* is an adjective, and not a noun or proper name. It is one of the titles of our Lord and means "the Anointed." *Through the Anointed One our Lord*. We get the idea of the anointing of our Lord from the unction of the Holy Ghost, which filled the Sacred Humanity, and made Jesus the Priest, the King, and the Prophet of God's people. There is a reference to this in one of the Psalms of the Little Office. *Therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness* [4]; and in the prophecy of Isaias: *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me; wherefore the Lord hath anointed Me to preach the gospel unto the meek* [5]. This thought, then, that *Christ* is an adjective, reminds us of our Lord's Office of Priest, King, and Prophet, by which He fulfils His mediatorship.

[1] Mal. iii. 2.

[2] Rom. xiii. 14.

[3] Heb. v. 7.

[4] Ps. xlv. 9.

[5] Isaias lxi. 1.

(11) *Lord in union with that Divine Intention, &c.*—All sanctity consists in having our will in union with that of our Lord. This prayer brings us at once into harmony with Him. As He deigns to use us, we are bound to enter intelligently into His designs : otherwise, we are not giving the *reasonable service* [1] He requires. His intention on earth was to do His Father's Will, and to worship Him with Adoration, Thanksgiving, Reparation and Entreaty. We must share in these ends to do His work. Mark the words *didst pay praises*. Jesus paid, on behalf of all Creation, the debt of worship to His Eternal Father.

(12) *I pay these Hours to Thee.*—The Office is a debt we owe to God and man. Like St. Paul we must say : *I am a debtor to the Greek and barbarians, to the wise and the foolish* [2]; that is, as vowed to Christ, and set by His Church to offer up her Prayer ; we have to pray in the name of all men, therefore we are debtors to those who do not pray for themselves or who know not how to pray. We come before the Throne of Grace as representatives of all Humanity and we discharge our debt by the Office.

[1] Rom. xii. i.

[2] Rom. i. 14.

CHAPTER II.

AT MATINS, OR NIGHT-SONG.

MATINS, the night Office of the Church, is originally of monastic institution, and was a private devotion in preparation for the early morning Office of Lauds. During this solemn hour we may think of some of the events connected with this time. The Annunciation, the Birth of our Lord ; His Own frequent prayers on the hill-tops of Judea ; St. Peter's denial and repentance ; our Lord in the tomb ; the desolation of our Lady ; the coming to judgment *like a thief in the night* [1] ; the cry at midnight : *Lo, the Bridegroom cometh* [2], and other such thoughts.

*Ave María, grátia plena,
Dóminus tecum : benedicta tu
in miliéribus, et benedictus
fructus ventris tui, J̄esus.
Sancta María, Mater Dei, ora
pro nobis peccatóribus nunc et
in hora mortis nostræ. Amen.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee. Blessed
art thou amongst women, and
blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
J̄esus. Holy Mary, Mother of
God, pray for us sinners now
and at the hour of our death.
Amen.*

(1) After having united ourself to our Lord's intention, the Church sets before us, as the most perfect model of the union which can exist between the Creator and the Creature, Mary, the Mother of God made man. The Church seems to say to us, with St. Ambrose [3]: " May there be in every one the spirit of Mary, that he may magnify the Lord." And what this spirit was the Gospel tells us in these words : *But His Mother kept all these words in her heart* [4].

[1] 1 Thess. v. 2.

[2] Matt. xxv. 6.

[3] Migne, P. L. vol. xv., p. 156.

[4] Luke ii. 51.

(2) *Hail Mary*.—The pious author of the *Myroure* thus discourses on the Hail Mary : “The salutation is taken from the gospel of the greeting of the angel Gabriel and of Elizabeth ; and it was the beginning of our health. And therefore this word *Ave* spelt backwards is *Eva* ; for like as Eve’s talking with the fiend was the beginning of perdition, so our Lady’s talking with the angel, when he greeted her with this *Ave*, was the entrance of our redemption. And so *Eva* is turned *Ave* ; for our sorrow is turned into joy by means of our Lady. For *Eva* is as much [as] to say as ‘Woe’ ; and *Ave* is as much [as] to say as ‘Joy,’ or without woe. Therefore meekly and reverently thanking this glorious Queen of Heaven and Mother of our Saviour for our deliverance, say we devoutly to her : *Ave* Maria, Hail Mary. *Mary* is as much as to say ‘Star of the Sea,’ or ‘enlightened,’ or ‘Lady.’ For all that are here in the sea of bitterness by penance for their sins, she leadeth to the haven of health. Them that are rightful she enlighteneth by [the] increasing of grace. And she showeth herself ‘Lady’ and Empress of power above all evil spirits in helping us against them both in our life and in our death. Therefore we ought often and in all our needs call busily upon this reverend name, Mary” [1].

(3) *Full of Grace*.—“Divers saints had divers gifts of grace, but never creature had the fulness of all graces but our Lady alone. For she was filled in body and in soul with the Lord and Giver of all graces.” [2] From the first moment of her being she was prevented and so girt about with grace that original sin could find no place. *The Lord possessed me from the beginning of His ways* [3]. *The garden enclosed, the spring shut up, the fountain sealed*, that Solomon sings of, and likens his beloved to [4], are types of our Lady’s soul ; and the grace within her was ever welling up in its fulness. The Psalmist refers to her in these words : *In the Sun He hath set His tabernacle* [5] ; for more glorious than many suns, was the soul of her who for nine months was the living tabernacle of God, and was adorned with the fulness of grace which was possible to any creature.

[1] Pp. 77, 78.

[2] *Myroure*, p. 79.

[3] Prov. viii. 22.

[4] Cant. iv. 12.

[5] Ps. xix. 4.

(4) *The Lord is with thee.*—"For with her He was in her heart by excellence of grace, and in her reverend womb [by] taking there a body of our kind" [1]. These words were also used by the angel who appeared to Gideon when he was threshing wheat by the vine-press to hide it from the Midianites: *The Lord is with thee, thou mighty man of valour* [2]. They were also the greeting which Boaz gave to his reapers: *The Lord [be] with you* [3]; and they are enshrined in the Mass and Office in the oft-repeated words *Dominus vobiscum*.

(5) *Blessed [art] thou amongst women.*—"For by thee both men and women are restored to bliss everlasting" [4]. Other women in Scripture have had these words applied to them: *Blessed above women shall Faël be* [5], sings the inspired prophetess, Debora, of Heber's wife, who with her hammer smote Sisera, the foe of Israel [6]; and Ozias, the high priest, in like manner addresseth Judith after her triumph over Holophernes: *Oh, daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth* [7]. These were types of our Lady. The words were said to Blessed Mary first by the angel at the Annunciation [8], and were repeated at the Visitation by St. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost [9], showing us that her blessedness is far above that of other women who were declared so only by their fellow-men. Our Lady receives the testimony not only of man, but of an angel *sent by God* [10].

(6) *And blessed be the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.*—"Blessed be the womb, and blessed the fruit thereof, which is life and good to angels in heaven and to men on earth; that is, Jesus, that is to say, Saviour. For He hath saved us from sin and from hell; He saveth us daily from the malice of the fiend, and from perils, and He hath opened to us the way of endless salvation. Therefore, endlessly be that sweet fruit blessed" [11].

[1] *Myroure*, p. 79.

[2] Judges vi. 12.

[3] Ruth ii. 4.

[4] *Myroure*, p. 29.

[5] Judges v. 24.

[6] *Ibid.* iv. 21.

[7] Judith xiii. 18.

[8] Luke i. 28.

[9] *Ibid.* 42.

[10] *Ibid.* 26.

[11] *Myroure*, *ibid.*

(7) *Jesus*.—This, like the name “Mary,” is an addition to the words of Scripture, linking in one salutation the two names.

(8) *Holy Mary, Mother of God*.—These words are of Ecclesiastical origin and should be very dear to us; for they proclaim that privilege for which all her graces were designed—the Divine Maternity. When Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople, taught that there were two persons in Jesus Christ, and that therefore Mary should not be called *the Mother of God*, the Council of Ephesus [431], held under St. Cyril of Alexandria, representative of Pope Celestine, declared the true doctrine of the Incarnation and that Mary, by rightful title, was to be called “Mother of God.” These words are, therefore, an act of faith in the Incarnation; for the Mother is ever the guardian of the Child:—*And they found the Child with Mary His Mother* [1].

The remainder of the prayer is a natural act of the heart, and was formulated about the sixteenth century. The Franciscans, in 1515, seem to have been the first to add them to the Breviary.

¶ <i>Dómine lábia mea apéries.</i>	<i>Oh, Lord open Thou my lips.</i>
℞ <i>Et os meum annuntiábit laudem tuam.</i>	<i>And my mouth shall show forth Thy praise.</i>
¶ <i>Deus in adjutórium meum inténde.</i>	<i>O Lord, incline to my aid.</i>
℞ <i>Dómine ad adjuvándum me festina.</i>	<i>O Lord make haste to help me.</i>
¶ <i>Glória Patri, et Filio, et Spíritui sancto.</i>	<i>Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.</i>
℞ <i>Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper: et in sæcula sæculórum. Amen.</i>	<i>As it was in the beginning, and now, and always; and in ages of ages. Amen.</i>
<i>Alleluia, (vel) Laus Tibi Dómine, Rex ætérnæ glóriæ.</i>	<i>Alleluia (or), Praise to Thee—O Lord, King of eternal glory.</i>

(1) *O Lord open thou my lips* are words taken from the great Psalm of penitence, the *Miserere*. “This verse is only

said at Matins, and is the beginning of God's service, in token that the first opening of your lips or mouth should be to the praising of God; and all the day after they should abide open and ready for the same and be so occupied and filled therewith that nothing contrary to His praising might enter us" [1]. The sign of the Cross is here made on our lips, to consecrate them to the service of Him Who was crucified. It reminds us, too, of that fiery coal which purified the lips of Isaias in the vision, the year King Uzzias died: *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. Also I heard the Voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? Then said I: Here am I; send me* [2]. The prophet gained courage after his purification; so do we when the love of God, known to us by the Cross, touches our heart and kindles the fire within us.

(2) *Lord incline to my aid* are words from Psalm lxi. 1. "As we cannot do anything well any time of the day without His help, as He says Himself in His gospel: *Without Me you may do right nought* [3], therefore both at Matins and at the beginning of each hour you ask His help and say: God take heed unto my help. And forasmuch as he that is doing of a thing and cannot bring it about hath need of hasty help, therefore feeling your need you pray our Lord to haste Him and say: Lord haste Thee to help me. And take heed that all this verse, both that part that is said by one alone and that that is answered by all together, is said in the singular number, as when you say 'mine' or 'me,' and not 'our' and 'us,' in token that you begin your praising and prayer in the person of Holy Church, which is one and not many. For though there be many members of Holy Church as there are many Christian men and women, yet they make but one body, that

[1] *Myroure*, p. 81.

[2] Isaias vi. 5-8.

[3] John xv. 5.

is, Holy Church, whereof Christ is the Head. And because that prayer that is said in the person and unity of Holy Church is never left unsped ; therefore, trusting that our Lord hath heard your prayer and is come to help you, you begin all together, lowly inclining, to praise the Blessed Trinity, and say : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost. One glory to all Three. For the Three Persons are one God. This word 'Glory' is no common English, and therefore you shall understand that 'glory' is called a good fame spoken of with praising. Therefore when you bid 'glory' to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, you ask and desire that the Blessed Trinity should always be praised and thanked, and worshipped, for His endless goodness that is in Himself, and for all the benefits that He hath done and shall do to His creatures, both in making of creatures in the beginning and continually keeping of them in their being, and in the perfect end He shall bring all things to ; and, therefore, you add to, and say : As it was in the beginning, and now, and always, and without end " [1].

(3) *Alleluia*.—"And you shall not in praising delight you in [the] melody of the song nor of the notes, nor in your own voices ; but all your joy and delight must set only in God ; therefore anon after *Gloria Patri* you say *Alleluia* [2] which is a word of joy and praising ; and especially it betokeneth that unspeakable joy that is in heaven endlessly in praising and lauding of God. Therefore praising our Lord with such ghostly joy as you can have in Him here and desiring to praise Him in everlasting joy, you say *Alleluia*. Doctors say

[1] *Myroure*, pp. 81, 82.

[2] *Alleluia* is a word supposed to be of Hebrew origin. It is one of those terms which cannot be translated. It is a cry of joy, admiration, and triumph, and is equivalent to *Praise the Lord*. Some writers have looked upon it as a word escaped from heaven : as in the hymn *Alleluia dulce carmen*, sung in former days on the Saturday before Septuagesima, when *Alleluia* ceases until Easter.

" Alleluia, song of sweetness,
Voice of joy that cannot die ;
Alleluia is the anthem
Ever dear to choirs on high ;
In the house of God abiding
Thus they sing eternally."

that *Alleluia* is as much to say as 'Praise God,' or 'The Praising of God,' or 'Lord make me safe,' or 'Sing praising to God,' or 'Father and Son and Holy Ghost,' or 'Light, Life, and Health.' But because it is a word of joy therefore in times of penance, that is from Septuagesima till Easter, it is left, and instead thereof you say : *Laus Tibi Dómine, Rex æternæ glóriæ*, that is, Lord, praising be to Thee, King of endless bliss. For though penance doing be praising to God, yet it is done in sorrow of heart and sharpness of body, and not in gladness and joy, namely, for sinful people. And therefore, in time of penance we say *Laus Tibi* not in joy, but in praising of God, and not *Alleluia*, which is a word both of praising and joy" [1].

THE INVITATORY.

Ave María, grátia plena : *Hail Mary ! full of Grace,*
Dóminus tecum. *the Lord is with thee.*

" But for it sufficeth not to you to praise and to joy in God alone but you must stir others to the same. Therefore, after *Alleluia*, or *Laus Tibi*, you begin the Invitatory, that is as much as to say, a 'calling' or a 'stirring,' whereby each of you stirreth and exhorteth others to the praising of God and of our Lady. And thereby also you call them that hear you and desire the others that are absent to come and praise with you. And thereto accordeth the Psalm *Venite* that followeth and is sung with the Invitatory" [2].

As these words were said by the Angel, it will be well to say them with the same feelings of joy, love, and reverence with which he greeted our Lady.

PSALM XCIV.

Title—A Prayer of a Song for David.

Argument.

Cardinal Tomasi [3] in the collection of arguments collected from Origen, gives the following as meanings of this psalm. That Christ, the Good Shepherd, predestinates

[1] *Myroure*, pp. 82, 83.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Opera omnia*, vol. ii. p. 46.

His sheep with eternal rest. The voice of the Church to the Lord touching the Jews. The voice of Christ to the Apostles touching the Jews. The voice of the Church advising to repentance.

Venerable Bede (?) (735) in his exposition of the Psalms [1] says concerning this one: "Praise denotes devotion of voice; *song*, cheerfulness of mind, *for David*, Christ our Saviour, to the end that we may come together and rejoice, not in vain delights, but in the Lord. The prophet foreseeing the rejection of Christ, invites the chosen people to come and praise God. Secondly, the Lord Himself speaks that the aforesaid people should not harden its heart lest that befall them which befell their fathers who did not reach the Land of Promise."

(1) *Venite, exultémus
Dómino, jubilémus Deo salu-
tári nostro: præoccupémus
faciem Ejus in confessióne, et
in psalmis jubilémus Ei.*

*Oh, come let us sing unto
the Lord. Let us heartily
rejoice in God our Saviour.
Let us come before His Face in
confession, and in psalms let
us rejoice before Him.*

St. Augustine (430) [2], commenting on this verse, remarks that the prophet invites us to rejoice, not in the world, but in the Lord. In saying *Oh come*, he means that those who are far off are to draw near. But how can we be far off from Him Who is present everywhere? By unlikeness to Him, by an evil life, by evil habits. A man standing still in one spot draws near to God by loving Him, and by loving that which is evil he withdraws from God. Although he does not move his feet, he can yet both draw nigh and retire; for in this journey our feet are our affections. Come, as sick men to a doctor to obtain relief, as scholars to a master to learn wisdom, as thirsty men to a fountain, as fugitives to a sanctuary, as blind men to the sun. Thus writes the Carmelite, Michael Angriani [3]. *Let us sing unto the Lord.* Why then do

[1] *Migne*, P. L. vol. xciii., p. 478.

[2] St. Augustine's *Ennarationes in Psalmos* are to be found in *Migne*, P. L. vol. xxxvi.

[3] Angriani was General of the Carmelites, died 1416. He wrote a very beautiful Commentary on the Psalms (published in 1581), the authorship of which was for a long time unknown. He is followed by Father Le Blanc, S.J., in a *Psalmorum Davidicorum* Analysis in six volumes. 1744.

we find it said : *Blessed are they that mourn* [1] and *Woe to you that laugh* [2]. Surely because they are blessed who mourn to the world, and the woe is to them that laugh to the world ; but blessed are they who exalt unto the Lord, who know not how to be glad of rapine, of fraud, of their neighbour's tears. He joys in the Lord, who in word, deed, and work, exults not for himself but for His Maker. Thus St. Peter Chrysologus (d. 450) [3]. *Our Saviour*. St. Jerome in his version of the psalms translates these words simply as "Jesus our Rock."

Let us come before His face, that is, says St. Augustine, let us make haste to meet Him, not waiting till He sends to call us before Him. Not that we can in any way forestall His grace and bounty to us, but that we may offer our thanksgiving with sufficient promptness to avoid the charge of ingratitude.

In confession, which may either be the confession of God's might and goodness, or of our frailty and sin, the confession of praise, or the confession of grief. In this second sense we are called upon to come away from our sins, to come in penance to God before He comes in judgment. *Confession* in the psalms is often used as equivalent to *thanksgiving*, for if we confess our unworthiness we must be filled with gratitude to God for His mercy in granting us forgiveness and restoring us to His favour. The *Face* of God often stands in Holy Writ for His wrath, e.g., *Turn away Thy Face from my sins* [4] ; and also for offering sacrifice, e.g., *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God ? shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old ?* [5] The sacrifice of thanksgiving under the Mosaic code was an oblation of cakes of fine flour and wafer bread ; and thus in this place, says Fr. Lorin, S.J. [6], we see a prophecy of the Sacrifice of the New Law, that Eucharistic oblation of praise and thanksgiving wherein Christ is Himself offered to the Father.

[1] Matt. v. 4.

[3] *Migne*, P. L. vol. lii. p. 328.

[5] Michias vi. 6.

[2] Luke vi. 25. [4] Ps. i. 9.

[6] Fr. Lorin, a learned French Jesuit (1634), wrote a large and most valuable Commentary on the Psalms, taken chiefly from the Greek and Latin Fathers. It is in three volumes, and was published 1611—1616.

And in psalms let us rejoice before Him.—Psalms, says St. Ambrose (397) denote the combination of will and action in good works because the word implies the use of an instrument as well as of a voice [1]. And, says Denis, the Carthusian, [2] we may *rejoice in psalms* when we are alone, as well as when joining with others in the offices of the Church, saying, *Oh come* all ye powers of my soul, my whole being and all that is within me, especially my reason, memory and will, let us be glad together in the Lord.

(2) *Quóniam Deus Magnus Dóminus, et Rex Magnus super omnes deos: quóniam non repellet Dóminus plebem suam, quia, in manu Ejus sunt omnes fines terræ, et altitudines Montium Ipse conspicit.*

For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods: For the Lord will not repel His people, for in His hands are all the ends of the earth, and the heights of the mountains doth He behold.

Says Fr. Corder [3], To us the words teach the mystery of the Eternal Son, pointing out that our Lord even in His mortal body is *a great God*, by reason of the Hypostatic Union, and also because He is the express Image of the Father; whence we find this very title given Him by the Apostle saying: *Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ* [4]. Christ, says St. Bruno (1125), is moreover the King whom all the gods, all those saints and rulers of His Church whom He hath made partakers of Him, obey and love: *I have said ye are gods* [5].

For the Lord will not repel His people, that Christian folk, says Cardinal Hugo [6], which He hath purchased with His

[1] Migne, P. L., vol. xiv.

[2] This great writer, called "the Ecstatic Doctor," was a voluminous writer. His Commentary on the Psalms (published 1558) is, as would be expected from a Carthusian, one of his very best works. He flourished about the year 1471.

[3] Father Corder, another Jesuit writer (1605), has written three volumes of a Commentary on the Psalms which he has drawn from the Greek fathers, adding further explanations of his own. The work is full of beauty and unction. Published in 1543.

[4] Titus ii. 13.

[5] John x. 34.

[6] Hugo of St. Cher, was cardinal of the title of St. Sabine, and is credited with being the first to divide the Bible into chapters. He commented on the whole Bible, and his exposition of the Psalms was published in 1498. He was a Dominican, and died 1268.

own Blood, He will not reject it, crying, praying, seeking or knocking to Him.

In His hands are all the ends of the earth.—If we take this as descriptive of the power of God over creation there is no better commentary on them than the words of Isaias: *He hath measured the waters in the hollow of His hand and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance* [1]. But the fuller explanation is to take it as showing that whilst false gods are worshipped in special places, He alone is Lord everywhere. And thus we see here a reference to the Church, no longer confined to the narrow limits of one people, but made up from all the nations of the earth. *The ends of the earth* may denote all the powers and faculties of man, a notion which is brought out better by the Hebrew—all the deep places of the earth.

The heights of the mountains are types of the exalted citizens of heaven: thus Lorin. St. Bruno says the *earth* is often put for men of earthly and grovelling minds, *mountain* for saints lifted high by contemplation of Divine things.

(3) *Quóniam Ipstus est mare, et Ipse fecit illud, et áridam fundavérunt manus Ejus: veníte adorémus, et procidámus ante Deum: ploremus coram Dómino, qui fecit nos, quia Ipse est Dóminus Deus noster: nos autem pópulus Ejus, et oves páscuæ Ejus.*

For the sea is His and He made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come let us worship and fall down before God: Let us weep before the the Lord who made us, for He is the Lord our God: but we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Besides the obvious interpretation concerning the wonder of creation, the *sea*, says St. Augustine, denotes the Gentile nations tossed about in the bitterness and barrenness of heathendom when the Jews, in their spiritual pride, refused to believe God's children. Yet He *made* them, as it is written: *Doubtless Thou art our Father though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: Thou, O Lord,*

art our Father, our Redeemer [1]. *And His hands have formed the dry land.* This *land*, differing from the sea in stability and in capacity of fruitfulness, denotes the Church or any holy soul. It is *dry*, says St. Bruno, because without the grace of God it can do nothing, as land will not bear unless it be watered, but gaspeth for Him as a thirsty ground [2]. He *formed* it, which means more than He *made* it, implying that He gave shape and beauty and fulness to that which before was *without form and void* [3] by reason of Adam's sin.

We are to *worship*, that is, to bend the head as servants to their master, to *fall down* as subjects acknowledging their king. *To weep*, for as Cassiodorus (562) says [4]: God calls His people first to rejoice, while they, as yet, do not know the spiritual life, lest they be alarmed and repelled by its sorrows and austerities; but when they have once accepted the faith, He then summons them to repent of their sins. But, says St. Peter Chrysologus, they are tears of joy; for gladness, as well as sorrow, brings weeping, and grief for our past sins is blended with the hope of blessing and glory to come. Some commentators, who take this Psalm as having special reference to our Lord's nativity, see here a command to adore Him in the manger, undeterred by the tokens of mortality and poverty around.

But we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.—St. Augustine tells us that we are hereby taught that we, even as *people*, are *sheep*, in respect of God, needing Him as a Shepherd, and only to be satisfied with His green pastures. Yet we are not unreasoning *sheep* to be driven with a staff. We are guided with God's Own hand, the very *hand* which made us and is so loving and ever heedful to prevent any harm that may come from the negligence, ignorance, or malice of those inferior shepherds, to whom He commits, in a measure, the task of tending His flock. He feeds us, says St. Bruno, with Bread from heaven, as He once fed our spiritual forefathers with manna in the wilderness; and He cares for us as a shepherd cares for his flock, so that we need

[1] *Isaias* lxiii. 16.[2] *Ps.* cxliv. 6.[3] *Gen.* i. 2.[4] His *Expositio in Psalterium* is to be found in Migne, P.L., vol. lxx.

not be solicitous, but cast all our care on Him. Says St. Bonaventure (1274), we must be like *sheep* in trustfulness, patience and innocence, and yet men in understanding, according to His Own saying : *And ye My flock, the flock of My pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord God* [1].

(4) *Hodie si vocem Ejus audiéritis, nolite obdurâre corda vestra, sicut in exacerbatione secûndum diem temptationis in desérto : ubi tentavérunt Me patres vestri, probavérunt, et vidérunt opera Mea.*

To-day if ye shall hear His voice harden not your hearts, as in the provocation and as in the day of temptation in the desert : Where your fathers tempted Me, proved Me and saw My works.

To-day, that is, *daily while it is called to-day*, as the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews explains in one of his threefold citations of this verse : *But exhort one another daily while it is called to-day* [2]. So long as the night has not come, so long as the door of mercy is not shut. *To-day*, at once, not deferring till to-morrow.

If you will hear His voice is the reply to the assertion in the previous verse : *We are the sheep of His pasture* ; for the proof of being one of Christ's flock is according to His own words—*My sheep hear My voice and I know them and they follow Me* [3]. This flock He gave in its entirety, both sheep and lambs, to His apostle Peter to be fed for Him [4]. So, if we are fed by Peter we are fed by Christ, and belong to His one fold. You call yourself His sheep ; prove your claim, then, by hearing His voice. And yet, as St. Bernard (1155) tells us, there is no difficulty at all in hearing His voice ; on the contrary, the difficulty is to stop our ears effectually against it, so clear is its sound, so constantly does it ring in our ears. The Jews, remarks the Carmelite, sinned by refusing to listen to the voice of our Lord ; and we also sin in the same way when we put off or refuse to repent. Satan's counsel, observes St. Basil (379) is, "*To-day for me, to-morrow for God*" ; whereas, He that hath promised pardon to repentance hath not promised to-morrow to the sinner.

[1] Ezek. xxxiv. 31.

[2] Heb. iii. 13.

[3] John x. 27.

[4] *Ibid.* xxi. 15, 16, 17.

Harden not your heart.—For in so doing, says Albert the Great [1], you set yourselves in direct opposition to the will of God, which is to soften those hearts, in that He said : *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, My speech shall distil as the dew* [2] to moisten the dry ground that it may bring forth the tender buds of grace ; whereas it is said of sinners that their hearts are stony : *I will take the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh* [3] ; and of Leviathan, the type of evil power, *His heart is as firm as a stone ; yea, as hard as a piece of nether millstone* [4].

As in the provocation and as in the day of temptation.—Some commentators refer the word *provocation* to the resistance of the Jews to the authority of Moses and *temptation* to their unbelief in the providence of God : *And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us or not ?* [5] Cardinal Hugo points out that the words which follow *in the wilderness*, are an aggravation of guilt, because it was exactly there, in the absence of all other help, that the thoughts of the Jews should have been most firmly set on God Who had so wonderfully brought them out of Egypt. Those who come out of the Egypt of sin or worldiness, who begin a life of repentance, are at first *in the wilderness*. They are deserted by those they have left behind ; and, not attaining yet to what they seek, they are much exposed, in that stage of spiritual progress, to the risk of rebellion, of unbelief in God, and of resisting the pleadings of the Holy Ghost.

Where your fathers tempted Me.—There is a stress on *your fathers*, implying that we are the same nations which sinned in a former period of its history and are therefore likely to fall again. The Carmelite remarks, we may tempt God in several ways : His mercy, by careless prayer ; His patience, by remaining in sin ; His justice, by desiring revenge ; His power, by not trusting Him during perils ; His wisdom, by

[1] Albert the Great, a Dominican friar, was the master of St. Thomas Aquinas, the Angelical doctor. He died 1280.

[2] Deut. xxxii. 2.

[3] Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

[4] Job xli. 24.

[5] Exod. xvii. 7.

undertaking to teach others without previous study and meditation.

Proved Me.—This is more than *tempting*, which denotes the bare experiment, whereas *proving* implies its success, for the God, whose power they doubted, slew them all in the wilderness.

And saw My works.—That is, says Lorin, although they saw them, and that during forty continuous years, yet they did not believe and were never subdued, but renewed their experiment after each miracle and each judgment.

(5) *Quadraginta anni proximus fui generationi huic, et dixi, Semper hi errant corde: ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias Meas, quibus juravi in ira Mea, si introibunt in requiem Meam.*

Forty years was I nigh to this generation, and said, these do always err in heart; in truth they have not known My ways. Unto whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest.

Forty years.—The writers do not fail to point out the mystical meaning of the number *forty*, repeated in the fasts of Elias and our Lord, and in the great forty days after Easter; and they tell us that as ten is the first limit we meet in computation, so that this number and its multiples give all the subsequent names to sums, it serves as the type of fulness; while four, as denoting either the seasons of the year or the quarters of the heavens, extends that fulness to all time and place; and thus *forty years* stands here for the entire span of our earthly sojourn. Remigius, monk of St. Germain (908) [1], points out the stress on *years*, because the journey of Elias [2] teaches us that the Israelities could have passed through the desert in *forty days* had they only been obedient.

Nigh.—Some commentators take this word in the sense that one who punishes is near the criminal, or of a teacher who keeps beside an idle and refractory pupil to compel his attention. St. Augustine explains it of God's continual presence in signs and miracles; while St. Bernard interprets it of an inward voice and inspiration. The cause of God's anger was

[1] Migne, P. L., cxxxii.

[2] 3 Kings xix. 8.

the ingratitude of the children of Israel for His unceasing watch over them.

This generation.—And whereas this applies literally to the 60,000 who came up out of Egypt, and then by accommodation, to all living men at any time *while it is called to-day*, there is also a special fitness in taking it of the Jews after the Passion of Christ ; for, says Perez of Valentia [1], the interval which lay between that and the final destruction of Jerusalem was almost precisely forty years, up to which time the door of hope was still open for Israel, and it was still *to-day* ere that terrible night set upon the Temple worship.

Always do these err in their heart.—This is much more forcible, observes Cardinal Hugo, than if it were said, *they err in act* ; for the error of an act has a definite end, whereas the error of the will has no end. Death puts an end to the evil doing of a sinner, not because he has lost the will to sin, but because he has no longer the power to do so.

For they have not known My ways.—The word *known* does not here signify that acquaintance with God's ways which may be gathered from reading or meditation, but that knowing which comes from a careful keeping to His *ways* themselves, that is, from living lives fruitful in good works. And the *ways* of God, as St. Bonaventure remarks, are all reducible to one, that is Jesus Himself, *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* [2] ; moreover, they all lead to the same heavenly country. They are one *way* in their making, their Master, and their end ; they are many *ways* according to the diversities of the working of grace, the variety of vocations and of disposition among those who journey home through the wilderness.

Unto whom I swore in My wrath that they should not enter into My rest.—This He did when the spies brought back evil reports of the Land of Promise and the children of Israel prepared to elect a leader to take them back to Egypt [3]. It is a terrible warning, comments St. Augustine. We began the Psalm with rejoicing but we end with awful dread. It is a

[1] He was Bishop of Christopolis in the fifteenth century. His work on the Psalms was published 1518.

[2] John xiv. 6.

[3] Num. xiv. 26.

great thing that God should speak ; but how much more that God should swear. A man who hath sworn is to be feared, lest he should, for his oath's sake, do aught against his will. How much more then ought we not to fear God Who cannot swear rashly ? Let no one say in his heart, that which He promiseth is true, that which He threateneth is false. As sure as thou art of rest, happiness, eternity, immortality, if thou keep the commandments, so certain shouldest thou be of destruction, of the burning of everlasting fire, of damnation with the devil, if thou despise His Law. He hath sworn that these shall not enter into His *rest*, and yet, *it remaineth that some must enter therein* [1], for it could not be designed for no occupant. And this *rest*, which meant the earthly Canaan to the Jews of old, means for us that Sabbath of the Heavenly Fatherland whereof the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us : *Now there remained a rest to the people of God* [2]. Even here, on earth, says the Carmelite, before reaching that blessed Land, there remaineth a *rest* for God's people, whereof the weekly Sabbath is a sign and a pledge. This is the *rest* from sin, common to all the just, and the *rest* from bodily cares and stilling of temptation, which come in measure to contemplative saints ; while, crowning all, there is the *rest* of the blessed, whence sorrow is banished for evermore. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief* [3] and be included under the terrible oath of exclusion ; and in prayer for grace that it may not be so, *O come let us worship and fall down and weep before the Lord our Maker*. Thus the Carthusian.

GLORIA PATRI [4].

Glory be to the Father, the great King above all Gods ;
 Glory be to the Son, the Strength of our salvation ; Glory be
 to the Holy Ghost who saith, *To-day if ye hear His voice harden
 not your hearts*.

[1] Heb. iv. 6.

[2] *Ibid.* 9.

[3] *Ibid.* 11.

[4] These ascriptions of praise, weaving into the *Gloria* thoughts suggested in the Psalm, are from the *Golden Commentary of Gerohus*, Prior of Reichersperg (1169), published in 1728.

THE HYMN [1].

(1) <i>Quem terra, pontus, sidera</i>	<i>The God, Whom earth and sea and sky,</i>
<i>Colunt, adorant, prædicant,</i>	<i>Adore and laud and magnify ;</i>
<i>Trinam regentem machinam</i>	<i>Who o'er their threefold fabric reigns,</i>
<i>Clastrum Mariæ bájulat</i>	<i>The Virgin's spotless womb contains.</i>

Creation, as we see it, consists of earth, sea, and sky, and the three form, as it were, the *machinam* by which God works out His will. The *Clastrum Mariæ* "understandeth her reverend womb" [2], which for nine months did carry the Lord of all things. Mary was the Tabernacle of Emmanuel—God with us—and the Most High sanctified His resting place [3]. The Ark of the Covenant in the Temple of Solomon was of incorruptible wood covered with plates of massive gold. It only contained the tables of the Law, a pot of manna, and Aaron's flowering rod. But Mary, the true Ark of the Covenant, incorruptible by her immaculate Conception and adorned with the gold of charity, contained within her, as in a most peaceful cloister, the very Giver of the Law, the very Bread of Life, and the true High Priest, Himself, Whom all creation worships, adores, and proclaims.

(2) <i>Cui luna, sol, et omnia</i>	<i>The God Whose will by Moon and Sun,</i>
<i>Deserviunt per tempora,</i>	<i>And all things in due course is done,</i>
<i>Perfusa cæli grátia</i>	<i>Is borne upon a Maiden's breast,</i>
<i>Gestant puellæ viscera.</i>	<i>By fullest heavenly grace pos- sessed.</i>

That is : Our Lady, filled with heavenly grace, doth bear Him, Whom moon, sun, and all things serve according to the seasons and times appointed to them : *And God made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night : He made also the stars. And God set them in the*

[1] The translation of this hymn is by Dr. Neale.

[2] *Myroure*, p. 220.

[3] Cf. Ps. xlv. 4.

firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness : and God saw that it was good [1]. Notice the word *perfusa*, i.e., bathed through and through, soaked ; like Gideon's fleece was soaked with the dews of heaven [2] ; so Mary was full of grace.

(3) <i>Beāta Mater mūnere,</i>	<i>How blest that Mother in whose shrine</i>
<i>Cujus sup̄ernus Artifex,</i>	<i>The Great Artificer Divine,</i>
<i>Mundum pūgillo cōtinens,</i>	<i>Whose Hand contains the earth and sky,</i>
<i>Ventris sub arca clausus est.</i>	<i>Vouchsafed, as in His ark, to lie.</i>

"That is : Blessed by the gift of the Holy Ghost is that Mother whose High Maker, that holdeth the world in His hand, is borne within the ark of her womb. Our Lord is said to hold the world in His hand, for all the world is full little in regard to His greatness. And as a man may do with a thing that he hath in his hand what he will, so is everything in the power of His hand and all is kept in being by Him [3]." *Artifex*, i.e., artificer—one who works according to Art, according to design. Art is the showing forth of the Beautiful ; and in the Incarnation to which the verse refers, we have the most perfect manifestation of God's art in adapting means to an end, in exhibiting the beauty of His power, and of His love, and of His wisdom.

(4) <i>Beāta cæli nūntio,</i>	<i>Blest, in the message Gabriel brought ;</i>
<i>Fecūnda sancto Sp̄ritu,</i>	<i>Blest, by the work the Spirit wrought ;</i>
<i>Desiderātus gēntibus</i>	<i>From whom the great Desire of Earth</i>
<i>Cujus per alvum fusus est.</i>	<i>Took human flesh and human birth.</i>

Nuntio cæli—the message of Gabriel : *Fecunda*. The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall

[1] Gen. i. 16, 17, 18.

[2] Judges vi. 38.

[3] *Myroure*, p. 220.

overshadow thee [1]. *Desiderátus géntibus*. Our Lord was the Longed-for; the Desired of the nations: *And the Desired of all nations shall come* [2]. His Advent was the prayer of the prophets and holy ones of Israel: *Drop down ye heavens from above and let the skies pour forth the Righteous, let the earth open and bring forth the Saviour* [3]. And when He came He told men that many kings had desired to see the things they saw [4]; and that Father Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and saw it and was glad [5]. *Fusus est*, poured forth as oil, or as light passing through a most pure crystal.

(5) *Jesu, Tibi sit glória,
Qui natus est de Virgine,
Cum Patre, et almo Spíritu,
In sempiterna sæcula.*

Amen.

*All honour, laud and glory be,
O Jesu, Virgin-born, to Thee!
All glory, as is ever meet,
To Father and to Paraclete.*

Amen.

This Doxology, or ascription of praise to the Adorable Trinity, is used for all the hymns in the Little Office. *Jesu, Tibi sit glória*: Our Lord as He is our thanksgiving, our Eucharist, so is He also our Praise. Therefore to Him and through Him we give our praise to the Blessed Three in One. The remembrance of His Mother, *Qui natus est de Virgine*, gives us the reason for the special act of worship—one of gratitude for the Incarnation which is Mary's gift to mankind. For, chosen herself by God, she freely consented to become the Mother of the Word made flesh. *Almo Spíritu*: the revelation of the Holy Ghost to us is that of infinite love. *The Love of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us* [6]. *In sempiterna sæcula*. The glory we give to God lasts for ever; for *He is the Father of lights with Whom there is no variableness neither shadow of turning* [7]; the Eternal God, *The Great I Am* [8]. This thought makes our act of worship deeper and fuller and brings a stillness over our soul as we think of the never-changing, never-ending glory, which, as an everlasting fire, surrounds the Eternal.

[1] Luke i. 35.

[2] Aggeus ii. 8.

[3] Isaias xlv. 8.

[4] Luke x. 24.

[5] John viii. 56.

[6] Rom. v. 5.

[7] James i. 17.

[8] Exod. iii. 14.

FIRST NOCTURN.

For Sundays, Mondays and Thursdays.

ANTIPHON.

<i>Benedicta tu in mulieribus</i>	<i>Blessed art thou amongst</i>
<i>et benedictus fructus ventris</i>	<i>women, and blessed is the</i>
<i>tui.</i>	<i>Fruit of thy womb.</i>

The following psalm being concerned with the wonders of creation, the Antiphon directs our mind to Our Lady as the choicest and most perfect creature of God. For if man be made a little lower than the angels and crowned with glory and honour, how much more honourable and glorious is She whose Office and holiness is far above that of the highest Angel? For which one of them could say to their God as She could say: *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee ?* [1]

PSALM VIII.

Title—To the end : for the wine-presses, a psalm of David.

Argument.

Tomasi. That Christ, the Son of Man, was made in His Passion a little lower than the angels. The voice of the ancient Church speaking of Christ and of faith. Also of the Ascension of our Saviour and of the infants that glorified Him and that said *Hosanna in the Highest!* The voice of the Church giving praise to Christ for the faith of all creatures.

Venerable Bede. For the wine-presses ; that is, a vintage song of thanksgiving. As in the wine-press when the grapes are bruised and the hardest pips crushed the sweetest wine pours forth, so when obstinacy and pride are crushed in the Church the sweetest tears of penance are beautifully expressed. The Church, true wine-press, at the commencement of the Psalm sings the praises of her Lord God, setting forth His majesty and the greatness of His operations. Then she speaketh more plainly of the nature of man which, from the

[1] Heb. i. 5.

low and depraved condition whereto Adam's fall had reduced it, He raised to the height of glory ; and the one Person of Christ in its two distinct and unconfused Natures is unhesitatingly acknowledged.

(1) *Domine Dóminus noster,* *O Lord, our Lord, how ad-*
quam admirábile est Nomen *mirable is Thy Name in all*
tuum in univérſa terra ! *the world.*

O Lord, our Lord. God's name is twice repeated ; for He is twice our Lord, in that He made us and in that He redeemed us. He is our Lord also through our knowledge and love of Him. We also are His servants ; by the special claim He has to our life, by our holy vocation ; therefore His interests are in a special sense ours. Again, *our Lord* naturally suggests Him Who by mortal birth is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh [1] ; our Elder Brother, Who has shown to us the infinite tenderness and love of the Father.

How admirable is Thy name : The *name* of God implying perfection, all beauty, all riches, all power, all wisdom, and implying also that sweetest of all relations, taught to us by our Lord Himself, the Divine Fatherhood. But the *name* of *our Lord* is still more admirable ; for it is the *Name* of Jesus, *name* above all other names at which *every knee shall bow* [2] ; the *name* which is the joy of the faithful and the true revelation of the Father.

In all the world, not in Judea alone, says Cassiodorus, seeing that in the fulness of the time the Gentiles were also to be added to the Church. And that Name when set up as a title over the Cross was written in three languages, as a sign that hereafter it should be preached, and should be worshipped by every tongue and nation.

(2) *Quóniam eleváta est* *For Thy magnificence is*
magnificéntia Tua super cælos. *lifted up above the heavens.*

Commentators take this for the most part literally of the Ascension according to the words of St. Paul : *Who descended, He it is also Who ascended above all the heavens that He might fill all things* [3] ; for then Christ, sitting at the right hand of

[1] Gen. ii. 23.

[2] Phil. ii. 10.

[3] Eph. iv. 10.

God the Father, sent the Holy Ghost and charged His Apostles to speak salvation in His Name as the only means of reaching heaven, and that He was constituted Judge of the living and the dead [1]. Others, and especially the Angelic doctor, see here implied the infinite distance between Christ *Who is the power of God and the wisdom of God* [2], and the very highest of the saints; not only the Apostles or the angels, but even Her who bare Him, Her whom Christian singers delight in styling the "new heaven." Father Lorin takes these words as implying that the *magnificence* of glory of God is far beyond what we can gather from the Scriptures, which tell us of the mysteries of heaven, or from those wonderful manifestations of His power and wisdom, the seven sacraments.

(3) *Ex ore infántium et lact-
éntium perfectísti laudem prop-
ter inimicos Tuos, ut déstruas
inimícum et ultórem.*

*Out of the mouths of babes
and sucklings Thou has per-
fected praise because of Thine
enemies, that Thou mightest
destroy the enemy and the
avenger.*

Literally, the Holy Innocents who thus glorified Christ by their death, and they that cried Hosanna by their acclamations, as He Himself hath taught us [3]. Spiritually, the weaker members of the Church of whom the Apostle writes: *I have fed you with milk and not with strong meat* [4]. And again, those who had the innocence and simplicity of *babes*; as the first-born of the Church, the Apostles, who, taught by their Lord to speak, fed by Him like new-born *babes* with the sincere milk of the word [5], and called by Him *His children* [6]. So the Carmelite Angriani and Perez. Also we may understand it of all religious souls who, in simplicity and innocence, look to God alone and receive from Him *their meat in due season*, the food of their souls, by the teaching of the Holy Ghost ever whispering to their conscience.

Because of thine enemies—for their conversion; or, if they will not turn, from their destruction, as it is written: *The arrows of the little ones are made their wounds* [7].

[1] Acts x. 42.

[2] 1 Cor. i. 24.

[3] Matt. xxi. 16.

[4] 1 Cor. iii. 2.

[5] 1 Peter ii. 2.

[6] John xxi. 5.

[7] Ps. lxiii. 8.

That Thou mightest destroy the enemy : for God has chosen the weak things of this world to confound the wise. Note ; He chooses this sign rather than any other for the greater confusion of the Jews.

Avenger : Not only tyrants and unbelieving nations whom God has at various times raised up to chastise a sinful people, but the evil spirit himself who is only an instrument in his Creator's hands, and whose power, like those other avengers, will be destroyed when the good designed to be done through them is accomplished.

(4) <i>Quóniam vidébo cælos</i> <i>Tuos, opera digitórum Tuó-</i> <i>rum : lunam et stellas, quæ</i> <i>Tu fúndasti.</i>	<i>For I see Thy heavens, the</i> <i>works of Thy fingers : the moon,</i> <i>and the stars, which Thou hast</i> <i>established.</i>
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Thy heavens, the works of Thy fingers : The whole course of events under God's Providence, Who has declared that all things should *work together for good to them that love Him* [1]. *Thy fingers*, not hands, because, as St. John Chrysostom says, this is but a small thing for God's omnipotence.

The *moon*, that is, the Church, which is constantly renewed and receives all her light from the true Sun. *The stars*, the saints of God, as it is written : *They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever* [2]. Note : He mentions not the sun, because the *Sun of Righteousness* [3] was begotten not made. Thus St. Ambrose. Again, the *moon*, says Jorgius [4], Confessor of Edward I., denotes our ever dear and blessed Lady ; and that for various reasons : As the *moon* draws all its brightness from the sun, and yet it is the most luminous object next to him, so Mary, made full of grace by Him whose countenance is *as the sun shining in his strength* [5], is the brightest of all the saints. And yet, as the *moon* is nearest to the earth, so our Lady is the lowliest of all in her humility. As the *moon* rules the tides, so Mary by her prayers helps those who are tossed on the bitter surges of the world.

[1] Rom. viii. 28.

[2] Dan. xii. 3.

[3] Malachi iv. 4.

[4] Jorgius, better known as Thomas of Wales, a Dominican, made Cardinal by Clement V. in 1305. Among many other works he wrote a Commentary on the Psalms, published in 1611 (p. 80).

[5] Apoc. i. 16.

And as Easter, the festival of the Resurrection, follows the course of the *moon*, so the spiritual arising of the Man by the Incarnation followed the consent of Mary's will to the message of the Angel. The choirs of angels which are her fellows [1] and bear her company, are rightly compared to *the stars*; only less than the *moon* in glory and beauty.

(5) *Quid est homo, quod
memor es ejus? aut filius hóminis,
quóniam visitas eum.*

*What is Man that Thou
art mindful of him? or the
Son of Man that Thou visit-
est him?*

When, therefore, the prophet considers all the things tending to man's salvation, the Providence whereby all events work together for his good, the Church given him as a mother, the saints as examples and friends, his thoughts are naturally carried back to the one source of all, which is the Incarnation. *What is Man?* The Psalmist answers in another place, *Every man is but vanity* [2]; and again, *All men are liars* [3]. *Man*: taken absolutely, as a sinner: the *Son of Man*, those who are endeavouring to keep the law of God. Thus St. Augustine. Also the *Son of Man*, our Lord's own description of Himself. In this sense the term is to be understood of His headship over the mystical Body.

Visitest the Incarnation, was God visiting His people, as it is written: *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and redeemed His people* [4]. And again, *Thou visitest the earth and blessest it* [5].

(6) *Minuisti eum paulo minus
ab ángelis, glória et honóre
coronasti eum: et constituisti
eum super ópera mánuum
tuárum.*

*Thou hast made him a little
lower than the angels, with
glory and honour hast Thou
crowned him: and Thou hast
set him above all the works
of Thy hand.*

The Carmelite says: For as much as Christ went not up unto joy, but first suffered pain, so here we see Him in

[1] Ps. xliv. 15.

[2] Ps. xxxix. 12.

[3] Ps. cxvii. 10.

[4] Luke i. 68.

[5] Ps. lxxv. 9.

His low estate first, and then in His glory; for the humility of His Passion was the merit of His exaltation.

Lower than the angels, in that He condescends to become mortal and passible. *A little lower*. And what marvel, then, of speaking in respect of His humanity, He saith : *My Father is greater than I !* [1]

With glory, as respects Himself ; *with worship*, in reference to others. Thus St. Basil. Again, *a little lower*, for it was but for a short time—a *little*, because He was mortal and passible of His own free will, and not like us, of necessity. *Glory*, in the victory of the Resurrection ; *honour*, on the throne of the Ascension. And note, as Albert the Great says, Christ is said to have many crowns [2], of which the chief are : the Crown of Mercy, wherewith He was crowned in the Incarnation and Nativity ; the Crown of Sorrow, when the thorny diadem of the passion was given Him ; that of Glory in the Resurrection and Ascension ; and that of Dominion, which He will receive when the Court of the Redeemed gathers around Him.

Over the works of Thy hands ; and therefore over those angels than whom for a season He was made a little lower.

(7) *Omnia subjectisti sub
pédibus éjus, oves et boves
univérſas : insuper et pécora
campi.*

*All things Thou hast put be-
neath His feet, sheep and all
oxen, yea, and the beasts of the
field.*

All things Thou hast put beneath His feet. Let the Apostle interpret : *In that He put all in subjection under Him, He left nothing that is not put under Him* [3]. *But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted Who did put all things under Him* [4]. Note in these three verses of the Psalm we have the four living creatures of the Apocalypse [5] (for these may denote the four parts of Christ's work of mercy), as well as the four evangelists. *What is man ?* Here we have the face of a man. *Thou hast made Him a little lower than the angels*, there the ox, the animal fit for sacrifice ; *Thou hast crowned Him with glory and honour*, there the

[1] John xiv. 28.

[2] Apoc. xix. 12.

[3] Heb. ii. 8.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 27.

[5] Apoc. iv. 7.

victorious lion ; *Thou hast put all things under His feet*, there the eagle that soars above everything else. So Rupertus [1].

Beneath His feet. As the head of Christ is His Divinity, so His feet are His manhood ; and to Him, as Man, is given the empire, which, as God, was always His, *Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature . . . that in all things He might have the headship* [2].

Sheep : By these we understand those whose business in Christ's Church is not to teach but to learn : *My sheep hear My voice* [3].

And all oxen : Those who labour in His word and doctrine ; according to that saying of St. Paul, quoting from Deuteronomy [4], *Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn* [5]. For by these great profit is obtained in His Church ; as it is written : *Much increase is by the strength of the ox* [6].

Yea : The word shows that a change of subject is made, namely, from the good to the wicked.

The beasts of the field : Those that own no master, but follow their own hearts' lusts, like *brute beasts*, as St. Peter teaches, *made to be taken and destroyed* [7]. For the wicked as well as the good are made subject to Christ. Thus St. Bruno, of Aste-Perez remarks, not only are the *sheep*, the lowly and the docile who hear the voice of the Shepherd, put under Him, but even the *oxen*, the powerful rulers of the earth ; and the *beasts* of the field, the wandering and barbarous tribes which knew no law before.

(8) *Vólucres cæli, et pisces maris, qui perambulans émi-tas maris.*

The fowls of the air and the fishes of the sea, and whatsoever walketh through the paths of the seas.

The fowls of the air are the saints who rise above the world, but only by means of the sign of the Cross [8].

[1] Ven. Abbat Rupertus, O.S.B., of Deutz, died in 1135. His Commentary on the Apocalypse is printed in Migne, P. L., vol. clxix. (See p. 912).

[2] Col. i. 15-18.

[5] 1 Cor. ix. 9.

[3] John x. 27.

[6] Prov. xiv. 4.

[4] v. 4.

[7] 2 Peter ii. 12.

[8] A bird with extended wings is in the shape of a cross.

The fishes of the sea : Ordinary Christians regenerated of water and of the Holy Ghost, and who are made fellows of Jesus Christ, the Divine Fish [1].

And whatsoever bad, as well as good, unholy, no less than holy ; *walketh through the paths of the seas*, that is, exposed to the waves and storms of this troublesome world. Thus Cassiodorus. But St. Augustine will have *the fowls of the air* to be the proud and ambitious, *the fishes* those who are restless and acquisitive. While others see in the winged *fowls* the angels ; in the *fishes* the evil spirits of the Abyss ; or again, in a good sense the dwellers in the isles afar, and mariners in them *who walk through the paths of the seas*. So Perez.

(9) <i>Dómine Dóminus noster,</i>	<i>O Lord, our Lord, how ad-</i>
<i>quam admirábile est nomen</i>	<i>mirable is Thy Name in all</i>
<i>Tuum in univérſa terra.</i>	<i>the world.</i>

Admirable, not only because He is very God, as set forth in the first verse, but also because He is very Man, as taught in the succeeding verses. The beginning and the ending of this Psalm is the same, as being in His praise Who is *the First and the Last* [2], *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever* [3].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who hath put all things under the feet of the Son of Man ; Glory be to the Son Who vouchsafed to become Son of Man, made lower than the angels, but now is crowned with glory and honour as Priest and King and Prophet ; Glory be to the Holy Ghost, the Finger of God's right hand (*Digitus Paternæ dextræ*, cf. *Veni Creator*), by Whom the heavens were made.

ANTIPHON.

<i>Sicut myrrha elécta odórem</i>	<i>Like choice myrrh Thou hast</i>
<i>dedisti suavitatis, sancta Dei</i>	<i>given forth Thy perfume, O holy</i>
<i>Génitrix.</i>	<i>Mother of God.</i>

[1] The old symbol of our Lord, so frequently found in the catacombs, is a fish, the Greek word is *ιχθvs*, which, read as an acrostic, means Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

[2] Apoc. xxii. 13.

[3] Heb. xiii. 8.

Myrrh was one of the mystic gifts of the three kings brought to the Holy Child. It denotes mortification, which is a necessity if we would be united to our Lord: *Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our body* [1]. We will dwell more upon the subject when commenting upon the lessons whence this antiphon is taken. But now it seems to foreshadow the 8th to the 13th verses, and gives us a thought about the Queen of Martyrs, in whose mouth the Church puts the words of the Canticle of Canticles: *A bundle of myrrh is my beloved to me* [2]. And this thought teaches us that it is by penance alone that we can repair the destruction sin has brought upon God's creation.

PSALM XVIII.

Title: A Psalm of David.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ entered the virginal shrine and proceeded from it in order that He might make known the secrets of men. Concerning the preaching of the Apostles and the Advent of Christ and His Ascension.

Venerable Bede: Through the whole psalm they are the words of the prophet. In the first place he praises the preachers of the Lord; he then uses the loveliest comparisons concerning His Incarnation. Secondly, he lauds the precepts of the Old and New Testament. Thirdly, he prays that he may be purged from his secret faults and may be made a worthy psalmist.

(1) <i>Coeli enarrant glóriam Dei, et ópera mánum Ejus annúntiat firmaméntum.</i>	<i>The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows forth the work of His hands.</i>
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By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the hosts of them by the breath of His mouth [3]. What heavens, asks St. Gregory the Great, are these, except the holy Apostles? [4]. And in this light all the fathers interpret the

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

[2] i. 13.

[3] Ps. xxxii 6

[4] Migne, P. L., vol. lxxvi. p. 33.

verse : that as the visible heavens set forth the glory of the Creator, so these spiritual heavens declare the praise of the Redeemer. The *firmament*, St. Augustine takes to be that firmness in speaking the Apostolic message even before kings and not being ashamed, that fearing not them that kill the body [1] but cannot touch the soul. Like the Apostles, who were weak, indeed, till they received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, but then they declared *the work of His hands*, the work of salvation wrought by the Incarnation.

(2) *Dies diēi eructat verbum,*
et nox nocti indicat sciētiam.

Day unto day, that is, saint to saint, prophet to prophet, apostle to apostle, Christ Himself (the King of apostles, the Inspirer of prophets, the Saint of saints), to each and all.

The Word, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity ; for the *days*, the saints filled with the light of the wisdom and glory of God, declare the mystery of the Incarnation to men.

And night unto night, the teachers here below, speaking of the same mystery and leading their hearers on to His love. Again, for *the nights* we may understand, with St. Augustine, the trials and afflictions of the martyrs and confessors, the struggles and self-denial of every upright soul, which speak to us in the night of our own affliction and distress and tell us that the loving kindness that delivered them can deliver us also ; for *The Lord's arm is not shortened, that it cannot save ; neither His ear heavy, that it cannot hear* [2]. That *night* speaks to us in no unintelligible voice : *Look at the generations of old and see : did ever any trust in the Lord and were confounded ?* [3] Or again, we may take it, with the Carmelite, of the work of the Six Days and the Rest of the Seventh, which we can compare with the Seven Gifts of the Spirit ; or, (as St. Augustine truly says : "Some words of scripture have, from their obscurity, this advantage, that they give rise to many interpretations : had this been plain, you would have heard some one thing ; but as it is, observe, you will hear

[1] Cf. St. Luke xii. 4.

[2] Is. lix. 1.

[3] Eccles. ii. 11.

many"), it cannot be more beautifully taken than of the seasons of the Church's year. Festival speaking to Festival, Fast to Fast, the faithful soul by Advent prepared for Christmas, by Lent for Easter, by the great Forty Days of Paschal joys for the Descent of the Holy Ghost; and by all these days of transitory holiness, made ready for that Eternal Day, the Festival which shall never be concluded [1].

(3) *Non sunt loquélæ, neque sermones, quorum non audi-
antur voces eorum.* *There is neither speech nor language; neither are their voices heard.*

And we may take the verse in two senses: either *no speech or language* among the nations of the earth to which these voices did not go forth, which must be their sense if we refer the clause to the Apostles; or there is no real speech in the preaching of the stars, and yet their language is intelligible to all nations. An old Portuguese divine, referring to this verse, says: "The most ancient preacher in the world is the sky. If the sky be a preacher it must have sermons, and it must have words. So it has, says David. And what are the sermons and words of the sky? The words are the stars: the sermons—their composition, order, harmony, and cause" [2]. Then again, as a recent writer remarks, "God's Word sounds silently in the heart. There is neither speech nor language; for, when the soul is alone with its Maker it is heart to heart, and words are spoken that are beyond human utterance. But the low, still voice is lost by worldliness and by too much serving and solicitude that is beyond God's will."

(4) *In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum: et in finis orbis erræ verba eorum.* *Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth: and their words unto the ends of the world.*

The quotation of that text by St. Paul: *But I say, have they not heard? Yes, verily, their sound went out into all*

[1] "The Church on earth with answering love
Echoes her mother's joys above:
These yearly feast days she may keep,
And yet for endless festals weep."

—Adam of St. Victor: *Supernæ Matris gaudia.*

[2] Vieira, *Obras*, vol. i. p. 40.

the earth, and their words to the end of the world [1] is, as is well noticed by Jansen, the bishop of Ghent [2], a sufficient warrant for the explanation that would understand the Apostles who were doers as well as hearers. And how did their sound then go forth? By the silent force of the example of a godly life. The power of a simple, natural life of one seeking God, with a single eye, is far greater than that of one who deliberately sets out with the intention of edifying his neighbours. He who so regulates his life, runs a great risk of being but a tinkling cymbal and sounding brass. But he who looks to God alone, and does his duty simply and naturally, without pretence or posing, does really edify; for deeds speak louder than words, and example tells more than preaching. Edification for edification's sake is the bane of the spiritual life of some who neglect *the liberty wherewith Christ has made them free* [3]. They have edified, as they are pleased to call it, and the good repute of men is their reward.

(5) *In sole p[ro]sui tabernaculum suum : et ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de thalamo suo* [4].

In the sun He hath set His tabernacle : and He Himself as a Bridegroom coming forth from His chamber.

In this and the following verse the Church has, from the beginning, seen a marvellous type of the Incarnation. *In the sun He hath set His tabernacle.* In the literal sense, of natural objects, the *sun* is the best and clearest representation of the

[1] Rom. x. 18.

[2] Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ghent (1510-1576), must not be confounded with his namesake of Ypres. He wrote a Paraphrase on the Psalms (published 1514), with valuable annotations.

[3] Gal. iv. 31.

[4] St. Ambrose, in his beautiful hymn, *Veni Redemptor Gentium*, thus makes use of this verse :—

“Forth from His Chamber goeth He,
The Royal Hall of Chastity,
In Nature two, in Person one,
His glad course, giant-like, to run.

From God the Father He proceeds,
To God the Father back He speeds;
Proceeds—as far as very Hell,
Speeds back—to Life ineffable.”

Creator. So the wise man in Ecclesiasticus : *The sun when it appeareth declareth at his rising a marvellous instrument, the works of the most High* [1]. In it many nations of the earth have seen the image of the God they adore. But for us, knowing that it shall *pass away and the elements shall melt with fervent heat* [2], it is but God's *tabernacle*. The true Sun is that which shall no more go down, when the Lord shall be our everlasting Light and the days of our mourning shall be ended [3]. Then, in the mystical sense, the sun and the *tabernacle* are the Lord's abiding in the Womb of Mary ; and the writers do not fail to quote from Ecclesiasticus that text : *As the sun when it ariseth in the high heavens so is the beauty of a good wife in ordering her house* [4]. The sun is also the spotless soul of Mary shining with the splendour of her pre-eminent redemption, a meet resting place for the most High God, the *tabernacle* He Himself hath made holy [5]. The *tabernacle* is the flesh of the Lord which was united for ever to His Divinity. Or again, as they who go out to war dwell not in houses or tents, so our Lord going forth to His war with Satan dwelt in the *tabernacle* of His flesh while He entered into the conflict with and when He overcame His enemy.

As a Bridegroom cometh out of His chamber. And here none can fail to see the Lord's entrance into the world from the Womb of Mary. The *Bridegroom*, hereafter to be betrothed to the Church on the Cross, came forth, as it were, in the morning of that day of which the sufferings of Calvary were the evening. The Eternal Light, says St. John of Damascus (c. 756), which, proceeding from the Co-eternal Light, had His existence before all worlds, came forth bodily from the Virgin Mary, *as a Bridegroom from His chamber*. [6].

(6) *Exsultávit ut gigas ad curréndam viam, a summo cælo egréssio ejus.*

He rejoiceth as a giant to run His course ; His going forth is from the uttermost heaven.

[1] xliii. 2.

[2] 2 Peter iii. 10.

[3] Is. lx. 20.

[4] xxvi. 21.

[5] Cf. Exod. xxix. 44.

[6] Migne, P. L., vol. xcvi. p. 663.

As a giant. The commentators go back for the full solution of this mystery. For instance, St. Bernard reminds us that it was from the union of *the Sons of God with the daughters of men* [1] that those ancient giants sprang, who may thus properly be called of *twofold substance*. It was the two Natures of our Lord by which the work of our salvation was accomplished. Thus the word *giant* in itself sets forth to us the whole scheme of salvation. I see, says St. Proclus of Constantinople, His miracles, and I confess His Divinity : I behold His sufferings, and I cannot deny His manhood. Emmanuel opened the gates of Nature as a Man, but it was as God He left His mother ever a virgin. He came forth from the womb of Mary as by a word He had entered ; without human corruption did He come forth [2]. St. Ambrose explains more fully the type of the *giant*. Him, Holy David the prophet describes as a *giant*, because, being One, yet He is double nature. He is both divine and human, and like a Bridegroom coming forth out of His chamber, rejoiceth as a *giant* to run His course. The Bridegroom of the soul is the Word ; the Giant of the earth, because fulfilling all the offices of Nature. Being God eternal He undertook the Mystery of the Incarnation.

His going forth. The Divine Master says : *I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go to the Father* [3] ; on which St. Gregory the Great asks : Would you know the steps by which He thus came ? From Heaven into the Womb ; from the Womb to the Manger ; from the Manger to the Cross ; from the Cross to the Grave ; from the Grave to Heaven. Behold, to make us follow Him He took these steps, that we might say from our very hearts, *Draw me, we will run after thee* [4]. Compare the type of the *giant* with the description of the Beloved : *Behold He cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills* [5] ; the work of Redemption was far beyond human strength, and needed a divine Giant to overcome the mountains and hills which lay in His way.

[1] Gen. vi. 4.

[2] Migne, P. L., vol. lxx. p. 691.

[3] John xvi. 28.

[4] Cant. i. 4.

[5] *Ibid.* ii. 8.

(7) *Et occûrsus ejus usque
ad summum Ejus : nec est qui
se abscondat a calore Ejus.*

*And His course is to the end
thereof : neither is there any
one who can hide from His
heat.*

Carrying on in this verse the image of the sun, as the dwelling place of God, or, in other words, of the Incarnation, we see how beautifully the *going forth* and the *course* are joined. He Whom we love has now gone up to heaven ; therefore our hearts burn within us while thinking of the glory which is His, and which is to be ours. No one is hid from the *heat* of the Divine Sun, from that fire which He came to kindle on the earth ; for His grace waits on every soul. And the thought of our Eternal Home with Him tells us that His Ascension belongs to us as well as to the angels [1]. It is our joy as well as theirs ; for it is the opening of the Father's House in which we look to find our mansion.

(8) *Lex Dómini immaculáta
convértens ánimas : testimó-
nium Dómini fidéle, sapién-
tiam præstans párvulis.*

*The Law of God is undefiled,
converting the soul : the testi-
mony of the Lord is sure, giving
wisdom to little ones.*

(9) *Justítiæ Dómini rectæ,
lætificántes corda : præcéptum
Dómini lícidum : illúminans
óculos.*

*The statutes of the Lord are
right and rejoice the heart :
the precept of the Lord is light-
some and giving light to the
eyes.*

(10) *Timor Dómini sanctus,
permanens in sæculum sæculi :
judícia Dómini vera, justifi-
cata in semetíp̄sa.*

*The fear of the Lord is holy
and endureth for ever : the
judgments of the Lord are true
and righteous in themselves.*

Christ is ascended into heaven, but His Law is left behind as the guide and rule of the Church, even to the end. Now there is a dead Law and a living Law. *The letter killeth, but the spirit quickeneth*, saith St. Paul [2]. Then what is this

[1] "O common joy, O common boast,
To us and that celestial host ;
To them, that He regains the sky,
To us, that He to us is nigh."

—*Optatus votis omnium.*

[2] 2 Cor. iii. 6.

living Law? It is the abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost ; in the Church to teach, in the soul to sanctify. It is by this Presence we know and can fulfil the Law. This Law, the Gift of the Holy Ghost, then, is the mantle which fell from our Elias when He went up on high, and which, if we hold steadfastly, will divide for us the Jordan of temptation [1]. *Giving wisdom to the little ones*, that is, says the Carthusian, the humble, by submitting their intellect to the teaching of the Holy Ghost, show in their deeds what they believe : *I praise Thee, Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them to little ones* [2].

Testimony properly belongs to things that are to be believed ; *Precept* to what is to be done. And notice, says St. Bruno of Aste, that the first character of Christ's Law is that it is undefiled : purity being put foremost as the foundation of all the service of God, just as impurity occupies the first place in almost every scriptural text of sin ; for, says Zigabenus (1125), the greatest saints have taught more will be condemned at the end of the world for more or less direct breaches of the sixth commandment than all the other commandments put together. Says St. Peter Damian : A certain simple-minded and honest man, one that feared God, had been hearing Matins and was returning from church. His disciples asked him, What did you hear at church, father ? He answered, I heard four things and observed six. A very subtle reply, and one which showed his faith. He had heard four verses of this Psalm, in which six things are noted : law, testimony, righteousness, commandments, fear, judgment [3]. Now, observe the six-fold division of these excellencies. Holy Scripture, as our blessed Lord taught us in the wilderness, gives us weapons of defence against temptation. But six is always the type of temptation [4]. After purity, as so continually in script-

[1] 2 Kings ii. 13, 14.

[2] Luke x. 21.

[3] Migne, P. L., vol. cxliv. p. 564.

[4] On the sixth hour of the sixth day the first temptation came into the world : the sixth petition of the Lord's Prayer is, *Lead us not into temptation* : the sixth blessing pronounced to the Seven Churches is : *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation* (Apoc. iii. 10), and the

ural lists of virtues, comes truth : *The testimony of the Lord is sure*. Then, that which our Lord Himself made one of the chief marks of His Gospel—that it should be preached to the poor—is also mentioned here : *Wisdom unto the little ones*. Notice further, the connection between purity (or lightness) of heart and illumination : *The commandment of the Lord is lightsome and giveth light unto the eyes* : exactly as in the beatitude—*Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God* [1]. Yet it must be confessed to be rather marvellous that holy writers on this Psalm seem unable to trace the especial connection between these six characteristics of the Word of God and do not see in them a ladder set upon earth and reaching to heaven.

Rejoicing the heart of those who through charity observe them ; for virtuous living is a natural delight.

The precept of the Lord is lightsome, that is, clear and appealing to our reason as a ray of divine justice and of eternal light *giving light to the eyes* of the heart, that is, to the intellect and the memory, lest they become steeped in the darkness of error.

The fear of the Lord is holy, that is, the Fear which is the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fear of sons : and *remaining for ever*, for bestowed while we are on earth the gift remains in heaven. There, at this moment, the human Soul of Jesus is penetrated with the reverential fear of God by the abiding Presence of the Holy Ghost.

Righteous in themselves ; for not only do they come from God, and therefore must be well ordered in themselves, but as we are the objects of His judgments so we are bound to acknowledge that these judgments are right and reasonable.

(11) <i>Desiderabilia super aurum et lapidem pretiosum multum, et dulcióra super mel et favum.</i>	<i>More to be desired are they than gold and much precious stone, sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.</i>
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In these three things some commentators see the chief

whole culminates in the 666, the mark of the Beast (Apoc. xii. 18), the most fearful of the many tempters that shall ever rise up against the Church.

[1] Matt. v. 8.

allurements of the world—riches, in the *gold*, power in the *precious stones*, pleasure in the *honey*. But, says St. John Chrysostom, the flowers that produce this honey were fed by no earthly dew ; the gentle distillations of the Holy Ghost gave them not only their beauty, but their sweetness [1]. And here notice how the Psalmist constantly uses *honey* in a good sense, or as a type of holy things. For instances of the opposite treatment : *Ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey* [2] is the command of the Law ; *It is not good to eat much honey* [3]. Perhaps, without being too minute, we may see in the special reference to the honeycomb a connection between the six-sided cell and the six-fold characteristics just mentioned of the Word of God.

(12) *Etenim servus Tuus
custodit ea, in custodiendis illis
retributio multa.*

*For Thy servant hath kept
them, in keeping them there is
much reward.*

According to Gerohus, our thoughts are here to turn to Him, the *Servant* of His Father, Who when tempted in the desert drew from the same sacred Word a three-fold quotation which put to flight the Devil in his three attempts. *Thy servant*. Holy men have not feared to apply *Well done, good and faithful servant* of the parable to our Lord Who came to do the will of Him that sent Him ; and Who had the praise from the people, *He hath done all things well* [4]. *In keeping of them*. Not *for* keeping of them, though that also ; but here it is spoken of the promise of the Life that now is, rather than that which is to come. It is the promise of the reward of closer union with God which comes from a conscience without a stain.

(13) *Delicta quis intëlligit ?
Ab occultis meis munda me : et
ab aliënis parce servo Tuo.*

*Who can understand sins ?
From my secret sins cleanse
me, and preserve Thy servant
from aliens.*

Who, indeed, can fathom the depth of iniquity into which he has fallen ? Who can estimate the baseness of his ingratitude to God, his presumption, his selfishness ? Who can estimate

[1] Corder i. 364.

[2] Levit. ii. 11.

[3] Prov. xxv. 27.

[4] Mark vii. 37

the insult sin gives to God by depriving Him of the service due from every creature? Who can understand the awfulness of the chastisement in store? Or who can gauge the price of forgiveness, or the value of the drops of the precious Blood? *My secret faults.* These commentators dwell on the tribunal of penance in which we are ourselves the accusers and ourselves the culprits; where we proclaim the most hidden thoughts of our hearts in order that hereafter the Eternal Judge may not say, *Thou didst it secretly, but I will proclaim it before all Israel and before this Sun* [1].

Cleanse me, however bitter the medicine, however full of shame the confession. *From aliens*, that is, from others who see their own interests and not ours. So from the devil and other enemies of our salvation who seek to drag us into their own state of banishment from our true country. St. Bruno distinguishes two kinds of sins: *the secret sins*, which arise in us from original sin and from our own sinful nature; and *the sins of others*, the suggestions of bad spirits or of bad companions external to the soul.

(14) <i>Si mei non fuerint domināti, tunc immaculātus ero: et emundābor a delicto máximo.</i>	<i>If they get not dominion over me then shall I be undefiled, and shall be cleansed from the great offence.</i>
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The terrible word *dominion* recalls the chain of sin, which, link by link, binds the soul, until one day it surely ends, if we repent not, in *the great offence*, that unforgiven sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost—final impenitence: *Woe to them when I shall depart from them* [2]. *This is the second Death* [3].

(15) <i>Et erunt ut compláceant elóquia oris mei: et meditatio cordis mei in conspéctu Tuo semper.</i>	<i>And the words of my mouth will be pleasing: and the meditation of my heart always in Thy sight.</i>
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(16) <i>Dómine, adjútor meus, et redémptor meus.</i>	<i>O Lord my Helper and my Redeemer!</i>
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He begins with the fruit, *the words of my mouth* and goes down to the root, *the meditation of my heart*. It is singular

[1] 2 Kings xii. 12.

[2] Osee ix. 12.

[3] Apoc. xx. 14.

that as this connection between the words and the thought follow in the Psalm the mention of the *great offence*, so that of the tree and its fruit [1] immediately succeeds in the Gospel to that saying concerning blasphemy against the Holy Ghost.

Always in Thy sight. If we lead a stainless life then our thoughts are never far away from God's Presence.

So the Psalm ends. It began by telling how *the heavens declare the glory of God*; it ends by telling how we should make known that glory. It began by recalling the perpetual succession of days and nights, with their ceaseless showing forth of God's praises; it ends with the prayer that our supplications may be always pleasing before Him Who is our *Helper*, now that He has made us His Own, as He was our *Redeemer* when we were far off. Our *Helper* to enable us to reach the Land flowing with milk and honey; our *Redeemer* from the land of Egypt and from the house of bondage.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father from Whom was the going forth of the Son; and to the Son Who cometh forth as a Bridegroom out of His chamber; and to the Holy Ghost the Spiritual heat from which nothing is hid.

ANTIPHON.

<i>Ante torum hujus Virginis</i>	<i>Before the Maiden's couch</i>
<i>frequentâte nobis dûlcia càn-</i>	<i>repeat to us the sweet songs of</i>
<i>tica drámatis.</i>	<i>the play.</i>

Under the guise of a nuptial song, Solomon, in the Canticle of Canticles, sings of the spiritual espousals between Jesus Christ and the soul, between the Head and the Members of the Mystical Body. The Canticle is laid out in the form of a drama between the Beloved and the Spouse; and it is this which seems to be the *play* referred to in the Antiphon. The *sweet songs* would be those the Beloved sings to His Spouse, such as: *Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone: the flowers have*

appeared on earth . . . Behold thou art all fair, my love ; there is no spot in thee [1]. As our Lady is the highest of all creatures and the one who has been brought into closer union with her Maker than any one else, *these sweet songs of the play* apply to her in a more perfect way than to others. Holy Church has always delighted so to apply them and to draw out their appropriateness to her who is *fairest among the daughters of men*. The antiphon also accentuates the idea which seems to pervade this nocturn, viz., God's design towards Mary, the work of His hands, the sharer, by compassion, in the Redemption, the type of union of the Creature with the Maker.

PSALM XXIII.

Title : The First of the Sabbath, a Psalm of David.

Argument.

Tomasi. That Christ sets the Church redeemed by His Blood above the waves of the sea. The voice of the Church after baptism. Concerning the beginning of the Church in which the princes of idols are excluded, and the kings of the same Church enter therein, and of the confirmation of the believing people. The gates of which he speaks are sins, or the gates of hell.

Venerable Bede. The *first of the Sabbath* signifies the Lord's Day, which is the first day after the Sabbath, on which day the Lord arose from the dead. And because the whole Psalm is sung after the Resurrection, therefore this title is well fitted to admonish the hearts of the faithful. After the Resurrection of the Lord the Prophet becomes more joyful ; addresses the human race then labouring with various superstitions ; defining in the first part that the whole of the universe is the Lord's and, as no one was excepted from His empire, so none should believe anything opposed to His faith. In the second place, he determines with what virtues they are endued who are set in His Church. Thirdly, he speaks lovingly to the heathen, that turning to the service of the true God they depart from their harmful perversity.

(1) *Domini est terra, et plenitudo ejus : orbis terrarum, et universi qui habitant in eo.*

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof : the compass of the world and all that dwell therein.

Whether or not this psalm was composed, as is probable, for the feast of bringing up the Ark from the house of Obed Edom to Mount Sion, at all events it was appropriated by the Jews to the first day of the week, and for many centuries has been used by the Church in the Sunday matins. St. Paul uses this verse to settle the controversy regarding meat offered to idols [1], which, like everything else, belongs to God, and could not really be affected by its pretended dedication to the idols that are nothing in the world. It is used in a very beautiful sense by the Greeks in the funeral service at the moment when the coffin is let down into the grave, that is, of the multitude of the bodies of the faithful who there are awaiting His Second Coming ; Innocent III. made use of it as an argument for the paying of tithes ; as if it were not much for man to return the tenth of that which belongs to God entirely.

And all that is therein. Notice the difference between the blessing of Jacob and Esau, which at first sight seems precisely the same. God, says Isaac to Jacob, *give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine* [2] ; while that of Esau was : *Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.* [3]. The difference consists in this : in one, heaven is put first, as imparting a true benediction to earth ; in the other it is mentioned last, as having no real lot or portion in the matter. Origen observes that till the time of our Lord's Advent the earth's fulness was not as yet ; as it is written : *Of His fulness have we all received* [4].

The compass of the world, or the round world as it is called in another psalm. Albert the Great remarks that this shows that the Church is not now, as of old, confined to one land and to one nation, but spread abroad over the whole face of the earth. *The earth is the Lord's.* And yet,

[1] 1 Cor. x. 26.

[2] Gen. xxvii. 28.

[3] *Ibid.* 39.

[4] John i. 16.

says Gerohus, the devil, the father of lies, ventured to say to its rightful owner : *All this will I give Thee and the glory of it, for that is delivered unto me and unto whomsoever I will give it* [1]. Be, then, says the commentator, like Him Who did not say in return : *The earth is Mine and the fulness thereof* ; and not like the great dragon, which said : *My river is mine own and I made it for myself* [2]. And notice the different way in which our Lord met two false claims of possession, Satan's and Pilate's. Satan's boast—This is mine—was only answered by a dismissal : *Get thee hence, Satan*. Pilate's speech—*Knowest Thou not that I have power ?*—was met with an argument : *Thou couldst have no power at all against Me except it were given thee* [3]. Satan, to whom no place was left for repentance, was not thought worthy of a reply ; Pilate, who might yet have been saved, was. *The earth is the Lord's*, and therefore it was well and wisely ordered that, just before her Lord and Possessor came to visit her, *There went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that all the world should be taxed* [4].

(2) <i>Quia Ipse super mária fundavit eum : et super flû- mina præparavit eum.</i>	<i>For He hath founded it upon the seas and prepared it upon the floods.</i>
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The literal sense of this verse is much disputed, but two explanations stand prominent above the rest. The one, St. Augustine's, is that since, by the Lord's command, the waters were gathered together in one place, in order that the dry land might appear, so, in a certain sense, the earth may be said to be formed by, or founded upon, this gathering together of the waters. The other explanation, which the Greek fathers adopt, is that of the earth being founded on, or fashioned by, the admixture of water, without which they say it would become dust and crumble away. But in the mystical sense, the *seas* may be taken for troubles and temptations, in which the *earth*, that is, the Church dispersed throughout the world, is founded ; while the *floods* signify the effusion of God's grace, by which also She is established. The bitter water

[1] Luke iv. 6.

[2] Ezek. xxix. 3.

[3] John xix. 10, 11.

[4] Luke ii. 1.

and the sweet water, says Albert the Great, are both equally necessary for her : The waves of the sea that *are mighty and rage horribly* [1] on the one side ; the rivers of the flood that make glad the City of God [2] on the other. St. Ambrose understands both the seas and the floods of one and the same thing, namely, tribulation. In tribulation, says he, the Church is *founded*, in tempests and storms, in anxieties and griefs ; and it is *prepared* in the floods of adversities.

(3) *Quis ascendet in montem Dómini ? aut quis stabit in loco sancto Ejus ?* *Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord ? and who shall stand in His holy place ?*

It is, says Gerohus, as if we, yet tossed about by the waves and storms of this world, these waves in which the Church is founded, were asking the way to that *Mountain* of heavenly peace, whither our Lord has already ascended as of old time, to pray for us. It is the same thing that is written : *Come ye and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob* [3]. Many will say, let us go up, but here the prophets ask : *who*, of all that number, *shall* ascend ? seeing that *many are called but few are chosen* [4]. And having gone up, *who shall stand* in that *holy place* ? But the interpretations of this *hill* are endless. Some take it for the Church militant ; some the Church triumphant ; some understand it of Christ Himself, in which they are authorised by that prophecy of Daniel when Nebuchodonosor beheld *the stone cut out without hands which became a great mountain and filled the whole earth* [5]. Others, strangely enough, explain it of Satan ; some of the state of perfection ; and some of the Cross. But the explanation which sees in it the heavenly mountain—*the mount of God, the rich mountain* [6], *Mount Sion, the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem* [7], as the Apostle writes, is by far the best and the truest. And no doubt there is an allusion to those mountains into which Moses, Lot, Aaron and Elias were commanded by God to go.

[1] Ps. xciii. 3.

[2] Cf. Ps. xlv. 4.

[3] Isa. ii. 3.

[4] Matt. xx. 16.

[5] Dan. ii. 34.

[6] Ps. lxxvii. 15.

[7] Heb. xii. 22.

(4) *Innocens manibus et mundo corde, qui non accépit in vano animam suam, nec jurávit in dolo próximo suo.*

Even he that hath clean hands and a pure heart, that hath not lifted up his mind to vanity nor sworn to deceive his neighbour.

Now we come to the four conditions requisite to render such an ascent possible : (1) *He that hath clean hands*—abstinence from evil-doing ; (2) *and a pure heart*—abstinence from evil thought ; (3) *that hath not lifted up his mind to vanity*—who does that duty he is sent into the world to do : *Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is all man* [1] ; (4) *nor sworn to deceive*—and remember the vows by which he is bound to God. Father Lorin remarks, that as in the fullest sense there was but One in Whom all these things were fulfilled, so, in reply to the question : *Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord*, he might well answer : *No man hath ascended up into heaven save He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man Who is in heaven* [2]. Therefore it is well written, says St. Bernard, that such a high priest became us ; because He knows the difficulties of the ascent to the heavenly mountain. He knows the weakness of us that have to ascend.

He that hath clean hands. So clean that they cleansed the leprosy ; so clean that they not only healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, but were stretched out to pardon sin ; so clean that the streams which poured from them on the Cross are to the cleansing of all evil deeds till the world's end. Thus Gerohus.

And a pure heart. Who, says St. Bernard, can conceive, much more express, the purity of that shrine, that Heart, where purity strove with love, which should have the pre-eminence, in a most sweet and tender contest—never to be decided ; that Heart, which, being opened by the spear, gave access to all guilty, all polluted creatures ; offered a hiding-place in the Rock from the anger that consumed a corrupted world.

That hath not lifted up his mind to vanity. No, for *being in the form of God, and thinking it not robbery to be equal with*

[1] Eccle. xii. 13.

[2] John iii. 13.

God [1], He yet made Himself *a worm and no man* [2]. Nor sworn to deceive his neighbour. That promise to redeem man, that declaration that the *Woman should bruise the serpent's head* [3] was, as St. Paul says, *a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation. And therefore that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, we may have strong consolation* [4].

(5) *Hic accipiet benedictiōnem a Domino : et misericōrdiam a Deo salutāri suo.*

He shall receive the blessing from the Lord : and mercy from the God of his salvation.

Whether like Abraham entertaining angels unawares, or like miserable Lazarus, carried by the same angels into Abraham's bosom, *he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness*, that is, love and mercy, so called, because faithfully promised, and therefore righteously bestowed. So Gerohus.

Of his salvation. And notice here, again, the appropriating pronoun ; the God of the salvation of all men is spoken of as the God of *his salvation* only who is thus blessed. Thus Father Lorin.

Mercy. And yet St. Augustine, commenting on such passages as this and those others *which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give in that day* [5], *That they may have a right to the Tree of Life* [6], and the like, says beautifully : He, O Lord, that enumerates to Thee his true merits, what else does he count up but Thy gifts ? And in another place : When God crowns our own merits He only crowns His own gifts. Yet it is better to see in this and the following verse the connection of the Head with the members, of the Captain with His soldiers, of the King with His people. *He*, that is, our Lord and Saviour, *shall receive the blessing* ; and not only He but faithful people with Him ; for it is written :—

(6) *Hæc est generatio quærentium Eum, quærentium faciē Dei Jacob.*

This is the generation of them that seek Him, of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob.

[1] Phil. ii. 6.

[2] Ps. xxi. 7.

[3] Gen. iii. 15.

[4] Heb. vi. 18.

[5] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

[6] Apoc. xxii. 14.

Because this mountain is so difficult to climb, because this Law of God is so hard for unaided nature to keep, therefore it might well be thought that only two or three in an age, nay, perhaps only He Who is righteous, had been able to ascend it. This verse, Albert the Great remarks, shows how mistaken such an idea is. St. Bernard distinguishes these *generations* : The first, those who remain yet unbaptised, who neither *seek* nor are sought by God ; the second, those who are sought by God in baptismal regeneration, but who *seek* Him not because not crucifying and utterly abolishing the whole body of sin ; the third, those who both *seek* and are sought, having been found by Him in baptism, and finding Him every day in earnest prayer and holy life ; the fourth, those who *seek* Him in a more special sense as having entirely given themselves up to Him in the religious life.

That seek the face of the God of Jacob. He Whom we *seek* is called the *God of Jacob* to signify that we also must struggle and wrestle as did that patriarch *until the breaking of the day* [1], if we would attain Him ; according to Jacob's words : *I will not let Thee go till Thou hast blessed me* [2] ; which lesson in earnestness of prayer is also taught by the double repetition : *Them that seek Him ; even of them that seek the face of the God of Jacob.* On which says Venerable Bede : That seek Thy face ! But what shall it be when the seeking shall have passed and the finding shall have begun ? When we shall not only behold the goodly pearl, but, having sold all we had, merit to purchase it ; when the time of prayer is over and that of praise shall have begun [3].

(7) *Attóllite portas príncípes vestras et élevámini portæ æternáles : et introíbit Rex glóriæ.*

Lift up your gates O ye princes and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors ; and the King of Glory shall come in.

[1] Gen. xxxii. 24.

[2] *Ibid.* v. 26.

[3] St. Bernard says :—

“ Jesu, the hope of souls forlorn,
How good to them for sin that mourn !
To them that seek Thee O how kind,
But what art Thou to them that find ? ”

—*Jesu dulcis memoria.*

There are six principal meanings of this verse. The first applies to Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday after His many wanderings, even as the Ark finally rested on Mount Sion. The second, adopted by St. Gregory the Great, refers it to our Lord's descent into hell, His *bursting the gates of brass, and smiting the bars of iron in sunder* [1]. St. Epiphanius (536) has, in one of his sermons, a magnificent passage in which he represents our Lord attended by an army of angels, Michael and Gabriel in the fore-ranks, demanding admission at hell-gate, bursting open the unwilling doors, tearing them from their hinges, casting them forth into the abyss, commanding that they shall never be raised any more. Christ, he exclaims, Christ the Door is present; unto God the Lord belong the issues of death [2]. The third signification would see in this verse the exclamation of the angels attending our ascending Lord. O faith, exclaims Gerohus, O eternal gate by whose present vision thou art perfected and exalted! And thou, O hope of the elect, which fixed on eternal blessings canst never disappoint, now exult, now rejoice, for lo, *the King of Glory* is about to enter in, to disappoint His servants of no part of the blessings which have been promised by thee. The fourth meaning, St. Augustine's, is that the *princes* are the kings of the world who are called, by accepting the Gospel, to permit the *King of Glory* to enter into their several territories. This would give to the verse the idea of a prayer for the Propagation of the Faith that *the earth which is the Lord's* might be His by faith, hope, and charity. The fifth meaning sees in the verse a prophecy of the Incarnation; and on this account it forms the offertory in the Mass for the Vigil of Christmas. This sense is adopted by St. Jerome, though here also he would find a spiritual reference to the virtual opening of the *gates* of heaven by the fact of our Lord taking flesh. The sixth interpretation is in this wise: Ye who were once the sharers of sin, but are now not only free, but *princes*, as gods, kings, and priests, *lift up your gates*, removing the barriers which sin puts between you and God, and those once gone *be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors of*

[1] Isaias xlv. 2.

[2] Migne, P. L., xliii. p. 458 (*Inter-dubia*).

virtue and holiness which cannot pass away, and then *the King of Glory* shall enter His palace of the believing soul. So St. Bruno, and Richard Rolle [1], after Origen.

(8) <i>Quis est Iste rex glóriæ ?</i>	<i>Who is this King of Glory ?</i>
<i>Dóminus fortis et potens : Dó-</i>	<i>The Lord strong and mighty ;</i>
<i>minus potens in prælio.</i>	<i>the Lord mighty in battle.</i>

The explanation of this must, of course, depend on the meaning we have attached to the previous verse. If that demand was addressed to the spirits of darkness, then the attendant angels may well speak of the victories won by the Lord in former days ; now for His people Israel when He overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea ; when the walls of Jericho fell down at the blast of the trumpet ; when the seven nations were cast out before the chosen tribes ; the victories over their enemies from the possession of the Holy Land till the overthrow of Antiochus. If we see in the demand the voice of the triumphant angels at the Ascension, well may they speak of *the Lord mighty in battle*, when Satan and all his hosts, when sin, and death, and hell have first been utterly routed. The words of Vieira are well worth notice : When Christ ascended in triumph to heaven the angels who accompanied Him said to those who kept guard : *Lift up, O ye princes, your gates, and the King of Glory shall come in.* They think the term strange ; and before opening the portal they enquire : *Who is the King of Glory ?* To the one and for the other band St. Augustine replies with these noble words : The heavenly spirits beheld Christ all glorious with His wounds ; and bursting into admiration at those glittering standards of divine virtue, they poured forth the hymn, *Who is this King of Glory ?* Wonderful saying ! Christ our Lord in the day of His Ascension went arrayed with glorious gifts like the blessed One that He was ; but the angels call Him not *the King of Glory* because they saw Him glorious, but because they saw Him wounded. Far greater glory for Christ and for the angels were those marks of His passion than the endowments of His blessedness. Or again, if we refer the

[1] Richard Rolle of Hampoole (1290-1349) was a Yorkshire hermit and mystical writer of great piety. He is sometimes called the English Bonaventura.

former verse to the Annunciation, the question here is only that of our ever dear and blessed Lady. *Who is the King of Glory?* And herein we adore with her the greatness of His love, that *the Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle*, did not abhor the Virgin's Womb and vouchsafed to dwell there till her days were accomplished [1].

(9) *Attólite portas principes vestras, et elevámini portæ æternáles : et introibit : Rex glóriæ.*

(10) *Quisest Iste rex Glóriæ ? Dóminus Virtutum : Ipse est Rex gloriæ.*

Lift up, O ye princes, your gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is the King of Glory ? Even the Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

Only one observation remains upon the repeated demand and reply. In the first, according to St. Augustine, the Lord victorious over the grave, was ascending into heaven alone, so far as human nature was concerned ; alone, so far as regards His faithful servants, bearing the burthen and heat of the day, while He was entering into rest. But now in this verse we look forward to the end of the world. And behold, He reascends, not now by Himself, but with all the multitude of the Redeemed, with all His saints from the beginning of the world to the last whose name is written in the Book of Life. Fitting, then, is the reply to the first question, *The Lord strong and mighty* ; for what greater proof of might than the overthrow of death and hell ? And with equal force the second reply is, *The Lord of Hosts*. For not as a single warrior in triumph does He come, but as a mighty Chief, followed by the throng of His victorious soldiers. And may *the Lord of Hosts*, so an old preacher concludes a sermon on this subject, the true David, the Victor over the spiritual Goliath, the Founder of the everlasting City and Mount Sion, be to us the pacific Solomon, *the Lord*, yet in another sense of *Hosts*, and introduce us one day into that Land where Juda and Israel shall be in multitude as many as the sand which is by the sea, eating and drinking and making merry [2].

[1] Luke ii. 6.

(2) Cf. 1 Kings iv. 20.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Whose is the earth and all that is therein ; and to the Son, the King of Glory ; and to the Holy Ghost the Righteousness of the God of our salvation.

VERSICLE AND RESPONSE.

¶. *Diffusa est grátia in lábiis tuis.* Grace is poured forth on thy lips.

¶. *Propterea benedixit te Deus in ætérnum.* Wherefore hath God blessed thee for ever.

This versicle is taken from the following psalm. Applied here to our ever dear and blessed Lady, it turns back our thoughts to the Annunciation, to that *grace* on her *lips* which showed itself in that wonderful casting of herself at the feet of her Maker, and abandoning herself entirely to His will : *Behold the handmaid of the Lord : be it done unto me according to Thy word* [1]. This was the grace of God, His mighty favour that chose her to be His mother. With this choice she had nothing to do ; but when the hour came, *grace* was poured forth on her lips to enlighten her intellect and assist her will to make the voluntary act of submission. It was by this willing consent that she merited that He should bless her for ever. In the three preceding psalms we have had suggested to us, Mary, the work of God's hands, crowned with glory and honour, sanctified as the divine tabernacle, pure and clean of heart receiving blessings from God, her salvation ; or, in other words, our ever dear and blessed Lady as Daughter of God the Father, Mother of God the Son, and Spouse of the Holy Ghost. And now the Versicle and Response come to tell us the reason of it all was her full consent, foreseen from all ages, to be the Mother of the Word made flesh.

SECOND NOCTURN.

For Tuesdays and Fridays.

ANTIPHON.

Spécie tua et pulchritudine tua inténde, prospere procéde, et regna. In thy comeliness and thy beauty go forward, fare prosperously and reign.

[1] Luke i. 38.

The original idea of the Antiphon was the selection of some one verse of the psalm to give a meaning to the whole. And we have here a very perfect example. The Antiphon fixes for us the idea of the glory and majesty of the Heavenly Bridegroom, *The King in all His beauty* [1], and the reflected glory which the Spouse hath, even as the moon reflects the splendours of the sun. Our ever dear and blessed Lady is the type and model of all spouses to God; she alone is all fair, and without the slightest stain. Therefore this psalm is rightfully applied to the mystical union between God and Mary and the relation which results to each one of the Blessed Trinity.

PSALM XLIV. [2]

Title : To the end : for them that shall be changed : for the sons of Core, to understanding. A Song for the Beloved.

Tomasi : That Christ, fairer in form than the children of men, joined by God the Father to the Church, is to be blessed. The Church is described as the Bride of Christ.

Venerable Bede : The prophet filled with heavenly meats, promiseth that he will announce the tidings of the Lord's Incarnation, that whence he himself was satiate, others might also be fed. The first part contains the praise of the Bridegroom, that is, of the Lord our Saviour; in the second part, the Bride, Holy Church, is praised for a like number of mystical virtues.

[1] *Isaias xxxiii. 17.*

[2] This psalm is a marriage song celebrating the espousals of Solomon, the King of Peace, with the Queen of the South. Some of its old titles are suggestive of the same idea, such as, "A Song for the Beloved," and "Upon the Lilies." In a psalm that speaks of the glory of the Virgin Church, of the glorious Queen of Virgins "that be her fellows," the allusion to the Lilies among which the Beloved of the Canticles feeds (ii. 16) is exquisitely beautiful.

" Among the lilies dost Thou feed
With virgin choirs accompanied
With glory decked, the spotless brides
Whose bridal gifts Thy love provides."

—Hymn : *Jesu, corona virginum.*

(1) *Eructavit cor Meum*
Verbum bonum : dicó ego ópera
Mea Regi.

My heart bursteth forth the
Good Word : I tell my works
to the King.

(2) *Lingua Mea calamus*
scribæ, velociter scribéntis.

My tongue is the pen of a
ready writer.

This is the introduction of the psalm, *My heart bursteth forth*, as though it could no longer contain the thoughts that fill it ; *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh* [1]. The *good word*. What can this *good word* be but the Eternal Word Himself, Whose espousals are going to be celebrated ? That same efficacious Word that spake and it was made ; that commanded and it stood forth ; that Word that *was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God*.

I tell my works to the King. And so the Father tells all the secrets of His Own eternity to that King anointed by Him upon the holy hill of Sion ; tells Him the plan of man's Redemption ; lays out before Him the mystery of Death destroyed by Death, and the Tree atoned for by the Tree. And do thou, in another sense, says St. Augustine, tell thy works also to the King that suffered for thee on the Cross ; thy works of weakness to the King Omnipotent, thy works that have any sweet savour of His grace in them to the King that will unite them to His Own Royal merits, and plead these merits for thine.

My tongue is as the pen of a ready writer. Just as the tongue when it speaks must part between the two lips, so the prophetic tongue speaks under the guidance of the Two Testaments. Mediæval commentators are rich in their reference to these two portions of Holy Scripture. The two points of a pen that form any one letter reminds them of that verse : *The Lord spoke once and these two things have we heard* [2] ; of the rod and the staff of which David sings ; of the ladder of Jacob with its two uprights and many rundles ; of the tongs of Isaias, which between them held the burning coal. And again, in the double split of the pen they see the Divine and Human natures of our Lord : the ink

is the Blood of Calvary; the pen, expressing the meaning of the holder, sets forth Him Who is the express Image of the Father and renders Him visible to mortal eyes; and a faultless pen, too, writing so quickly, so clearly, without blots or erasures, because working under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. As Theodoret (458) says: Of the Psalms the Holy Ghost is author of all; and the tongues of those by whom they were set down were the ready writers of what He uttereth and spake unto them [1].

(3) <i>Speciosus forma præ filiis hominum, diffusa est grátia in lábiis Tuis: propterea benedixit Te Deus in ætérnum.</i>	<i>Thou art fairer than the children of men. Grace is poured forth from Thy lips: therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever.</i>
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Most of the Eastern commentators, such as St. Athanasius, St. Cyril of Alexander, &c., deny that the Incarnate Word possessed human beauty, and based their teaching on the words of Isaias: *He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him there is no beauty that we should desire Him* [2]. But these words surely refer to the disfigurements and sorrows of the Passion. The more general opinion of the Western Doctors is that of this Son of David also is that saying true: *In all Israel there was none so much to be praised for His beauty: from the sole of His feet even to the crown of His head there was no blemish in Him* [3]. This is the general tradition of the Church and the almost universal teaching of Christian art. St. Bernard, in many and many a passage, tells us of the exquisite beauty of our Lord's humanity. St. Anselm expressly blames a certain vision for denying it. St. Isidore breaks forth with a rapture of admiration at the earthly glory of the Incarnate Word; and the Angelical seems to claim such a belief as certain. But His human beauty had nothing of mere sensual loveliness. It was in truth the outward reflection of the majestic soul within. There must have been a sweetness and a tenderness, a gentleness, and yet a power, about that Divine Face which could attract so many different people,

[1] *Interpretatio in Psalmos*, see Migne, P. L., lxxx.

[2] Isaias liii. 2.

[3] 2 Kings xiv. 25.

the little children, the workmen, the rich and learned [1]. But how that face altered ! Towards the end of that weary three years and a half of public ministry His face was marred by toil and exposure ; and when, in the Passion, it had been smitten by the soldiers, and spat upon ; when that Divine Head had been crowned with thorns and brought into the dust of death, then was Isaias' prophecy made true : *There is no beauty that we should desire Him* [2]. The sweet face of the Babe of Bethlehem was lost in the pallor of the death-stricken Victim.

Grace is poured forth on Thy lips, says the Bride : *The lips of my Spouse drop as the honey-comb : honey and milk are under Thy tongue* [3]. Blessed lips, indeed, that spake as never man spake ; that said to the poor man sick of the palsy, *Thy sins are forgiven thee* [4] ; that comforted the woman taken in adultery with the assurance, *Neither do I condemn thee* [5] ; that on the evening of the Day of Sorrow showed to the longing eyes of Man that home whence he had been banished, saying, *This day thou shalt be with Me in Paradise* [6] ; that by one word made Himself known to her that loved much, *Mary* [7] ; that first gave a blessing to the little band of Apostles ere they said aught further : *Peace be unto you* [8]. But to us how full of grace if those lips shall one day, after all our falls, in spite of all our sins, notwithstanding all our wanderings, bid us *Come ye blessed of My Father* [9].

Therefore God hath blessed Thee for ever ; that eternal benediction which belongs essentially to the Co-eternal Word, and that which as Man He merited by doing His Father's will according to the words of the Prophet : *He shall see the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied ; by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many : and He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the great, and He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because He hath poured out His soul unto death* [10].

[1] The one type of the face of our Lord, which has been so universally received, must have had some real foundation.

[2] liii. 2.

[3] Cant. iv. 11.

[4] Matt. ix. 2.

[5] John viii. 11.

[6] Luke xxiii. 43.

[7] John xx. 16.

[8] *Ibid.* 19.

[9] Matt. xxv. 34.

[10] Isaias liii. 11, 12.

(4) *Accingere gládio Tuo
super femur Tuum, Potentissime.*

*Gird Thee with Thy sword
upon Thy thigh O Thou most
mighty.*

(5) *Spécie Tua et pulchritudine
Tua inténde, prospere
procéde et regna.*

*In Thy comeliness and Thy
beauty go forward, fare prosperously
and reign.*

The Psalmist having in a rapture of holiness unveiled the King of Kings as He is in His Own eternity, now proceeds to arm Him for His wars on earth.

Thy Sword. St. Paul says, *The sword of the spirit, which is the Word of God* [1]. In the highest and noblest sense that Word is the Son of God, but most commentators agree in applying to the message of the Gospel this *sword* of which the Psalmist speaks. And in this *sword* bound on the *thigh* they see these glad tidings wherewith, as by a mighty weapon, the enemies of our race are to be hewn down. To this effect we read in the Apocalypse, the King of Whom this psalm is indited, *hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written : King of Kings and Lord of Lords* [2]. They take *vesture* of the glory of His Divinity ; the *thigh* of the humility of His Humanity : in both evermore to be victorious. *With thy sword.* There are not wanting those who would see in this *sword* the Dolour ; that bitter sword which pierced the heart of His blissful Mother even from the days of Simeon's prophecy [3], and pierced also His own, and wrung from Him the cry : *O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me* [4]. Yet, still as we may take it in reference to the Incarnation ; because, says St. Jerome, had He not first been true Man to suffer, He could not have thus proved Himself true God.

Most mighty. God shows His might, as the Church says in one of the Collects, "most chiefly in showing mercy and pity." Thus is the *sword* the proclamation of His mercy whereby He made His way amongst His enemies ; not in the storm nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice.

[1] Eph. vi. 17.

[2] Apoc. xix. 16.

[3] Luke ii. 35.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 39.

Go forward, fare prosperously and reign. These words addressed to our Lord are best interpreted, it seems, by that passage in the Apocalypse when the four living creatures address their Lord in four different characters with *Come* [1]; and He accordingly appears successively as the Rider on the White Horse, as the Conqueror on the Red Horse, as the Warrior on the Black Horse, as the Judge on the Pale Horse with Death and Hell led in triumph behind Him. Going forth to conquer, He conquers and reigneth for ever Master of Life and Death. Or with Denis the Carthusian: *Set out* from the most chaste Womb of Mary; *fare prosperously* in establishing Thy Church; and *reign* by faith and grace here below in the hearts of the faithful, and in heaven by the Beatific Vision.

(6) <i>Propter veritatem, et mansuetudinem, et justitiam: et deducet Te mirabiliter dextera Tua.</i>	<i>Because of Truth and Meekness and Righteousness: and Thy right hand shall lead Thee wondrously.</i>
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Thou shalt reign *because of Truth and Meekness and Righteousness*. Here commentators find a glorious application to the three orders of the saints: the *truth* of martyrs, the *meekness* of confessors, the *righteousness* of just men. And these all reflect back upon Him Who is the Martyr's crown, Whose meekness was learnt by confessors and Whose righteousness gives merit to all godly souls. Denis the Carthusian explains the words: *Because in truth, meekness, and righteousness* Thou wert confirmed, O Christ, from Thy Mother's womb, therefore in all Thy conversation without fault shall Thy *right hand*, that is, Thy Divine Nature, lead Thee wonderfully. Or, *Thy right hand*, that is, the works of Thy right hand, *shall lead Thee wondrously*; from the form of a servant and the death of the Cross to the express Image of the Father and the sharing of His Throne. For here, the Psalmist gives, as it were, a summary of the teaching of St. Paul, showing how the suffering of the Incarnate Word merited the elevation of the sacred Humanity.

(7) *Sagittæ Tuæ acutæ, Thine arrows are sharp :*
pópuli sub Te cadent, in corda the people shall fall under
inimicórum regis. Thee : into the hearts of the
King's enemies.

Verily, *sharp* are the *arrows* of love which subdue the hardest *hearts* among the *people* that *imagine a vain thing against the Lord and against His Anointed* [1]; O glorious wound, cries St. Gregory Nyssen (c. 394), O sweet stroke whereby life and love penetrate into the inner man! *Thine arrows* in very deed: Thou art the true Eliseus that must command Joas to take bow and quiver [2]; Thou must lay Thy hands, Thy wounded hands, on his to strengthen them, before each Joas among Thy people can shoot the arrow of the Lord's deliverance. And all their virtue comes from Thy Bed of Death, the hard Bed of the Cross. These were the *arrows* that pierced the hearts of the martyrs, and therefore we fools counted their life madness, and their end to be without honour [3].

(8) *Sedes tua Deus in sæ- Thy seat, O God, is for ever :*
culum sæculi : virga direc- the rod of rule is the rod of
tiónis virga regni Tui. Thy kingdom.

Unto the Son He saith it [4]. The Holy Ghost, therefore, teaches Who it is that speaks and Who it is that is spoken to. It is not wonderful that the Jews and Arians should have been perpetually pressed with the beginning of this verse as a formal proof of the Divinity of the expected Messiah; as a proof, too, which no art of the devil or man can gainsay.

Thy seat. What seat is meant? Is it the Seat of Judgment which at the consummation of all things the Son, according to St. Paul, will resign to the Father [5]. Or is it the Seat of Kingly Authority which will last for ever? *He shall reign over the house of Jacob, and of His kingdom there shall be no end* [6].

The rod. This is the *rod* that devoured the serpents of the spiritual Pharaoh, itself esteemed as one of them when they said, *He hath a devil* [7]. This is the *rod* which divided the

[1] Ps. ii. 2.

[2] 4 Kings, xiii. 16.

[3] Cf. Wisdom v. 4.

[4] Heb. i. 8.

[5] Cf. 1 Cor. xv. 24.

[6] Luke i. 33.

[7] John x. 20.

Red Sea in two parts and made its depths a way for the ransomed to pass over. This is the *rod* which, stretched out against Pharaoh and his hosts, overwhelmed them in the mighty waters. This is the *rod* that smote the stony rock and the waters gushed out and the streams flowed withal. This is the *rod* that, laid up in the Tabernacle, bloomed blossoms and yielded almonds. This is the *rod* or sceptre which every trembling Esther must touch to live. This is the *rod* we must hold forth in our hands when we eat the spiritual passover. This is the *rod* wherewith we must pass with Jacob over Jordan. This is the *rod* that breaks *the staff of His shoulder, the rod of His oppressor* [1]; that shatters the *Assyrian, the rod of His anger* [2]; through which the *rod of the ungodly shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous* [3]; that causes the wicked to exclaim concerning the spiritual Moab: *How is the strong staff broken and the beautiful rod that overthrows the rod of pride in the mouth of the foolish* [4]. Finally, the *rod* is the *Sceptre rising out of Israel* [5] that Balaam saw in the vision.

(9) *Dilexisti justitiam, et odisti iniquitatem : propterea unxit Te Deus, Deus Tuus, oleo lætitiæ præ consórtibus Tuis.*

Thou hast loved righteousness and hast hated iniquity : therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.

Thou hast loved righteousness [6]. An oriental commentator says : Thou, O Christ, the King, hast loved righteousness. To whom else should we address it ? How He loved it He showed by the fulfilment of the promise made as soon as the earthly paradise was lost, that the heavenly Eden should be won by His own sufferings; that promise on which so many prophets and righteous men anchored their hopes ; that promise which, tried in Gethsemane, on the Way of Sorrows, at Calvary, was triumphant over all the agony, endured all the shame, lived through and prevailed by death.

[1] *Isaias ix. 4.*

[2] *Ibid. x. 5.*

[3] *Ps. cxxiv. 3.*

[4] *Jer. xlviii. 17.*

[5] *Numbers xxiv. 17.*

[6] These, in the first person, were the last words of St. Gregory VII., and he added, "and therefore I die in exile."

Therefore. And that, the Angelical says, either as a final or effective cause, *therefore* hast Thou wrought *righteousness* that God might anoint Thee; or, to this end hath God *anointed* Thee as King, Priest and Prophet; that Thy sceptre might be the golden sceptre of mercy, or the iron one of severity; that Thy staff might bring forth living waters for Thy people as did that of Moses; and, as did not that of Eliseus, raise the corpse, the human race, dead in sins, to a better life.

The oil of gladness. We may take this clause in two senses. The first, *Wherefore, O God, Thy God hath anointed Thee*; where we have, as St. Hilary (368) remarks, a manifest reference to the Blessed Trinity; the address being to the Son, *O God*, the action from the Father, *Thy God*; and the Holy Ghost represented by the *oil of gladness*, as it is written: *How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost* [1]; and as the Church sings in the hymn: *Tu spiritualis unctio*. But others, as St. Athanasius, see in the redoubled nominative the Father and the Holy Ghost, taking the *oil of gladness* rather of the grace of that Blessed Spirit than Himself, and considering our Lord's Person sufficiently expressed, though not absolutely named. In this second explanation it may be asked: Why is the Holy Ghost called *Thy God*? The reason is not far to find. It is on account of the particular relation the Third Person has with the Sacred Humanity of Jesus. The work of the Incarnation, the forming of the Sacred Body from the most pure blood of our ever dear and blessed Lady was the work of the Holy Ghost. "He was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary," as we sing in the *Credo*. Thus the Human Soul of Jesus Christ was sanctified not only by Its union with the Godhead, but also by the special indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier, Who filled it with His created grace, adorned it with His seven Gifts, and produced in it His Twelve Fruits. The act of oblation by which our Lord redeemed the world was wrought by the help of the Holy Ghost; for our Lord, as the Apostle says, *offered Himself by the Holy Ghost* [2]. So in a very special sense the Third Person

[1] Acts x. 38.

[2] Heb. ix. 14.

can be called, in reference to the Man Jesus, *Thy God*. It was this sanctifying grace which was the *oil of gladness* which anointed the Sacred Humanity.

Above Thy fellows. Who are the *fellows* of Christ but His brethren, who are co-heirs with Him in the kingdom of God [1]? We may take the words in the sense of a comparison of the Human Nature of our Lord with that of all those who have been made partakers of the same grace, angels as well as men; they partly and imperfectly, He in fulness from the beginning, though the manifestations grew more and more glorious, as St. Luke formally teaches [2].

(10) *Myrrha, et gutta, et cásia a vestimentis Tuis, a dómibus ebúrneis : ex quibus delectavérunt Te filiæ regum in honóre Tuo.*

Myrrh, and aloes, and cassia from Thy garments, out of the ivory palaces : whereby kings' daughters in Thine honour have delighted Thee.

What is *myrrh* but the bitterness of mortification and self-denial. *A Bundle of Myrrh is my beloved to me* says the Spouse in the Canticles [3]. Count up, says the Carmelite, this bundle, O Christian, and reckon all the sufferings, all the rejections, the fasts, the vigils, the doing good and bearing ill of the Lord : *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death* [4] ; *Now is My soul troubled and what shall I say* [5].

Aloes. Good, say the physicians, against tumours and swellings. What do they set forth but that humility which is the antidote of swelling pride ? *Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me : for I am meek and lowly of heart* [6].

And *cassia* : a reed that grows by the running brooks and rises to an immense size, is a type of Faith which fixes its roots in the waters of Baptism and extends until it fills the world. Not that our Lord, in the strict sense, possessed or could possess the virtue of Faith, because on account of the Beatific Vision which filled His soul, He could not believe that which He saw : but, being the Author and Finisher of our Faith, He may be said thus to set it forth to us.

[1] Cf. Rom. viii. 17.

[2] Luke ii. 40.

[3] i. 13.

[4] Matt. xxvi. 38.

[5] John xii. 27.

[6] Matt. iv. 29.

Thy garments represent the Sacred Humanity whence we are to take the example of penance, humility and faith. *Out of the ivory palaces.* Hear St. Augustine : Would you understand the spiritual sense of *ivory palaces*. Understand by them those magnificent houses and tabernacles of God, the hearts of the saints. *Whereby kings' daughters in Thine honour have delighted Thee :* the Carmelite takes instead of *palaces*, the word *cabinets*, and sees in the *kings' daughters* the bearers of rich, precious ointments, who were very early at the sepulchre ; and in the *caskets* the vessels in which they brought them to anoint the Body of that dear Lord. *Kings' daughters.* If He Whom they follow is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Apostles are kings over whom and by whom He rules ; as it is written : *All kings shall fall down before Him* [1]. And it was through their preaching, such as that saying of St. Paul, *I count all things as loss so that I may gain Christ* [2], that the *daughters* are gathered together and set in their place among the hundred and forty and four thousand who sing the New Song before the Throne of God, by leading here lives of penance, of humility, and of faith after the example of Him their soul loveth, and having these virtues enshrined in the ivory palace of chastity, they delight and honour Him Whose gracious Voice they have followed.

(11) *Astitit regina a dextris
Tuis in vestitu deaurato : cir-
cūdata varietate.*

*Upon Thy right hand did
the Queen stand in golden
array : girt about with variety.*

And to whom are we to give that glorious title ? Some will behold the Church triumphant, the *Jerusalem above that is mother of us all* [3], the happy assembly, so glorious with the blood of the martyrs, so illustrious with the confessions of snow-white virgins ! O former humility ! says St. Bernard, O present sublimity ! O whilom earthly dwelling, now a heavenly mansion. O house once of clay, now temple of light. O slave, once defiled and miserable with Egyptian bondage, now glorious, now peerless, now beautiful, now all beauty, now free. But together with most of the mediæval commentators, who is the *Queen* but our ever dear and blessed

[1] Ps. lxxi. 11.

[2] Phil. iii. 8.

[3] Gal. iv. 26.

Lady? What *the golden array* but her peerless sanctity; what the *variety* with which she is girt about but the assemblage of all those faithful souls who have ordered their life towards God in imitation of her who kept all the words in her heart [1]. Thou, O *Queen*, art thyself the immaculate law, the faithful testimony of the Lord, the lucid precept, the right judgment, the holy fear of God, the sweet meditation, herald and interpreter of the entire God. It is to be noted, as St. Basil (379) remarks, that the Hebrew word for *queen* here used means a "queen consort"; thereby teaching us that her dignity is derived from Christ and not inherent of her own right or merit. And observe, she *stands* at the King's *right hand*, denoting the unassailable firmness of her position; but she does not *sit*, as our Lord does, at the Father's right hand. But the place, as Bellarmine (1621) points out, denotes not only precedence of honour, ranking above the angels themselves, but her blessed and prosperous state in His kingdom. St. Gregory and others behold in this *queen* every faithful soul; but more especially those blessed ones who, having embraced the religious life here, are nearest to the Bridegroom of the virgins there. *Upon Thy right hand*. O happy estate (cries a mediæval writer), which we know is incapable of change. O most blessed place, which so many saints have gone through fire and water to attain, which so many martyrs have, after the manner of men, fought with beasts at Ephesus to come at, which so many confessors have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins so as to possess at last.

(12) <i>Audi filia, et vide, et inclina aurem Tuam: et obli- viscere pópulum Tuum, et domum patris Tui.</i>	<i>Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear: forget also thine own people and thy Father's house.</i>
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If we interpret the Queen of our Lady, we may see here two persons who speak. It may be the Psalmist speaking according to the flesh to her who was his descendant; or it may be God, the Father, speaking to her, the immaculate Bride. But truly this is one of the passages which above all others shows how inexhaustible are the meanings of the

[1] Cf. Luke ii. 19.

Psalter. An Eastern writer calls this verse, and the following, the bridal song of the Mother of God. St. Athanasius, comparing the words of the Angel Gabriel with those of the Psalmist, dwells on the *daughter* of the one contrasted with the *Mary* of the other. If we take the Church to be the "Queen" (and, indeed, the one explanation does not interfere with the other, Mary being the Mother of the whole Church, the "Neck" which joins the Body on to its Divine Head), we may see here, with St. Augustine, an exhortation to forget her Judaic origin, to cast behind her the coldness of the letter and to enter into the liberty of the spirit. They who see in it every penitent soul, find a magnificent exhortation to the same effect as that of the Apostle : *Old things are passed away : behold all things are become new* [1] ; the old desires, the old pleasures, the old hopes ; and after the struggle, arrayed with that beauty in which the King delights.

Forget also thine own people. St. Bernard says that the Christian soul must not take pattern by the tribe of Manasses, for half of that tribe, satisfied with the pasture and cornfields of the eastern side of Jordan, asked to remain there ; and only the other half pressed on to the Land of Promise [2]. The prayer to be allowed to remain among the good things of this life is frequently answered in anger ; just as when the Gadarenes, having lost their swine, besought our Lord to depart out of those coasts. He yielded at once and never more returned [3].

And thy Father's house. Yet, that the Queen may not suppose that she is thus made an orphan, she is accosted as *daughter* in the beginning of the verse ; for she becomes God's own child by adoption and grace. Those who are called to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth must forget the ties of earthly loves, which keep them back from obeying the Vocation : *A man's enemies are those of his own household*, says our Divine Master : and again : *I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother.* . . . *He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me* [4]. The creature's duty is *God alone*.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 17.

[2] Josue xiii. 29.

[3] Matt. viii. 34.

[4] Matt. x. 35-37.

(13) *Et concupiscet rex decorem Tuum : quoniam Ipse est Dominus Deus Tuus, et adorabunt Eum.*

So shall the King have pleasure in thy Beauty : for He is the Lord thy God, and they shall worship Him.

The call to the mystic espousals. The Carmelite, following many of the mediæval interpreters, takes *thy beauty* to refer to the Blessed Sacrament, the Sacrament of all beauty as well as of all love. The gift to the Bride is so much her own, that He who gave it, as it were, desires it and has pleasure in it. So they compare the text : *With desire have I desired to eat this Passover with you* [1] ; and the words of this verse ; that is, this Passover, this better than Passover, which is the source of every great act of endurance or of daring, this Passover which has prepared every elect soul for the Marriage Supper of the Lamb—this belonging now rather to the Bridegroom to be His special beauty—this I have pleasure in. As how should He not, when such a multitude of petitions, arising from every corner of the earth, are accepted in heaven by the beauty and might of that Sacrifice in which, though Christ being risen from the dead, dieth no more, yet He still vouchsafes to offer Himself under the hands of sinful priests and, as the great High Priest, to offer that same Sacrifice at the throne of God the Father.

And they shall worship Him. Although the King of our heart is so gracious and tender in His love, yet we must never forget that He is the Lord our God. As a holy anchoress of the days of Edward III., Julian of Norwich, says in her Revelations : “Flee we to our Lord and we shall be comforted, touch we Him and we shall be made clean ; cleave we to Him, and we shall be secure and safe from all manner of perils ; for our courteous Lord willeth that we be as homely with Him as heart may think or soul may desire. But be we ware that we take not so recklessly this homeliness, for to leave courtesy ; for our Lord Himself is sovereign homeliness, and so homely as He is so courteous is He, for He is very courteous. [2]

[1] Luke xxii. 15.

[2] Sixteenth Revelation, chap. lxxvi. 1.

(14) *Et filia Tyri in muné-
ribus vultum Tuum deprecá-
buntur : omnes divites plebis.*

*And the daughters of Tyre
entreat Thy favours with gifts ;
and all the rich among the
people.*

St. Augustine thus explains this passage: They who came from the East to bring their offerings to Christ were not its daughters but its sons. Why then does it speak of the *daughters of Tyre*, the meaning being the same? Because, as the Apostle says, *In Christ there is neither male nor female* [1]. And, again, says the great Carmelite expositor, why *the daughters of Tyre*? Because Tyre, as the Empress of the Sea, is a type of the powers of this world, seeing that in the next *there shall be no more sea* [2]. But more truly, perhaps, the Carthusian, who beholds in the daughters of Tyre, famous for its purple, the self-oblation of the martyrs, according to that saying of Nahum the prophet: *The shield of His mighty men is made red, the valiant men are in scarlet* [3]. There is much force, too, in the meaning of the word *Tyre*, strictly a "rock," and thus taken for "strong" or "mighty." *The daughters of Him* who was made the Rock of Holy Church bring to our ever dear and blessed Lady the gifts which have come to them from her intercession. They recognise her as the Queen of Virgins, and honour and reverence her as such. They are the *rich among the people* as being in a state of perfection and the objects of God's intimate love. The closer the union which exists between the Bride and the Bridegroom the closer must be the bond existing between them and His mother; and daily do they bring their tribute of love and homage, *their gifts*, whereby they entreated her face to be gracious unto them with her Son.

(15) *Omnis glória ejus filia
regis ab intus, in fimbriis
dureis circumamicta varietá-
tibus.*

*The King's Daughter is all
glorious within : in golden em-
broideries surrounded about
with diversity.*

And first observe how this King, Who made the Marriage for His Son, calls the Bride His daughter. O blessed soul, so says an old writer, lifted up from the more earthly love,

[1] Gal. iii. 28.

[2] Apoc. xxi. 1.

[3] ii. 3.

raised above the wretched cares of this world, changed from Leah into Rachel, having the heritage of Israel instead of the toils of Jacob, who art received in the loving arms of such a Bridegroom, and made partaker of the kingdom of such a Father. And why should it be said that *the King's daughter* rather than the King's Bride is all glorious? Truly, because that most loving Bridegroom wooed and obtained His Bride, not on the throne of His glory but in the depth of His humility. The new Eve was created out of the side of an Adam who slept no sleep of rest, but the hard slumber of the Cross.

Within; that is, as nearly all commentators take it, *within the palace*, the inner chamber whereof the Spouse sings in the Canticle: *The King hath brought me unto His chamber* [1]. An emblem, this inner chamber, of the interior and contemplative life in which is the real beauty which ravishes the heart of the Beloved. All external work is as nothing in His eyes, save and except as it is the outward manifestation of the beauty within. The Carmelite remarks that in this verse there is a prophecy of the history of the Church.

The King's daughter is all glorious within. There you have the holiness of the Church so glorious with martyrs, so illustrious with confessors, so resplendent with ascetics. In the rest of the verse we have that more dangerous period of her history when the world bestowed her treasures on the Church, and so many of her children, by receiving them, became worldly and lost their savour. St. Gregory of Tours (595) saw and lamented this, and said: In the days of old there were crosses of wood, but bishops of gold.

In golden embroideries. The royal robe of God's kingly love which He throws over His Spouse.

Surrounded about with variety. The spirit of the Church is not that of a hard, mechanical uniformity; for where the faith is one the outward expressions, or rather the practical workings out of that inward unity, can be left to the Spirit *Who breatheth where He willeth* [2]. The wonderful variety which surrounds the heavenly Spouse; the ever varying

sequence of fast and festival, the sevenfold hours, the grades of the heirarchy, the natural instincts of various nations manifesting itself in the liturgies, architecture, painting, sculpture, music, and ceremonial; all these are differences in oneness, all unity in multiplicity [1].

(16) *Adducéntur Regi virgines post eam : próximæ ejus afferéntur Tibi.*

After her shall virgins be brought unto the King : her fellows shall be brought unto Thee.

The Church, or our Lady, is fruitful to her Divine Spouse, and brings to Him other virgins in her train whose spiritual beauty gladdens His heart.

Her fellows. St. Bernard, in his sermons on the Canticle of Canticles, which he preached to Cistercian nuns, thus comments on these words: O Lord how am I to interpret this fulness of meaning? Am I to say that these my children are her fellows, her equals, who is the fulness of Him that filleth all in all! Or, how can I say that they are equals of Her who is the Mother of my Lord and my God? So let us rather take *her* as the type and representative of every faithful soul; the likeness and pattern of them, as Abraham is called the Father of the faithful. *The Virgins* then, and what a multitude they are, who follow *her* as she follows the King and Lord of the Virgins, shall bear her company. Sweet society of them that are called by the same name; of them that profess the same desire! O most foul reproach and ignominy of them who, while they profess the same wish, are yet torn asunder by the various lusts of this world, of their own

[1] It was the largeness of mind, that eminently benedictine characteristic, which made the monk, Pope Gregory the Great, write thus to St. Augustine when that saint was laying deep the foundation of the English Church. "You know, my brother, the custom of the Roman Church in which you remember you were bred up. But it pleases me that if you found anything either in the Roman, or the Gallican, or any other church which may be more acceptable to Almighty God, you carefully make choice of the same and sedulously teach the Church of the English, which, as yet, is new in the Faith, whatsoever you can gather from the several churches. For things are not to be loved for the sake of places, but places for the sake of good things" (*Bede. Hist. Eccl.*, Book i. cap. 27). This was the principle of girding the heavenly Spouse about with diversity, each nation after its own kind giving forth praise to God,

hearts, or of him that is the father and founder of all divisions, Satan.

(17) *Afferéntur in lætitia et
exultatione: adducéntur in
templum regis.* *With joy and gladness shall
they be brought, and shall enter
into the King's temple.*

And oh, what a joy will that be, says a mediæval writer, when they, who have so struggled among the thorns here, shall be transformed by Him Who now wears the crown of gold there. What when they, who have trod in the King's footsteps below, shall be received to the King's embraces above! What when they who have thought it so much but to see the print of His feet upon earth, shall be *kissed with the kisses of His lips* [1] in the heavenly kingdom! What words can express, what heart can devise these good things which the true Solomon hath prepared for the soul that, like another Queen of Sheba, comes from a far country to behold His glory? And what shall we say of them who, because of the six miserable *lions that wait on this side and on that, according to the six footsteps of the throne* [2], shall be afraid to approach to Him, the Lion of Juda Who sitteth upon the Throne.

(18) *Pro pátribus tuis nati
sunt tibi filii: constitues eos
príncipes super omnem terram.* *Instead of thy fathers thou
shalt have children whom thou
mayest make princes in all
lands.*

Theodoret remarks that the Hebrew shows that these words are spoken to the King, not to the Queen. Following St. Augustine, we may here compare the Synagogue with the Church, the Law with the Gospel, the letter with the spirit.

Thy fathers. The types, the prophecies, the histories, the miracles; everything that might lean forward to Him in Whom all types form their antitypes, in Whom all histories find their fulfilment, in Whom all miracles are turned into that chief of all miracles—God Incarnate. Or, with the Carmelite, we may take this verse as recalling the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession. As the wise man says: *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh* [3];

[1] Cant. i. 1.

[2] 2 Paralip ix. 18.

[3] Eccles. i. 4.

and all these are *princes* to carry on the government of the Church, chiefs to extend its dominions among them that serve other gods ; and yet obedient to that unchangeable Faith and Authority, and offering the unceasing Sacrifice. It has been well said by St. Augustine : Think not thyself undone because thou hast not beheld Paul, because thou cannot see Peter, because thou lookest not upon those through whom thou wast born. Out of thine own offspring has a multitude of *fathers* been raised up to thee. See how widely diffused is the King's temple of which we read before. This is the universal Church : this is she whose children go to the uttermost islands of the seas, to call men to come to the one Body and be led to the glorious temple of the King.

Princes in all lands. All those who share in the Kingly priesthood of intercession, those who are chosen to be official representatives of the Church, and are privileged to join in the Liturgical Prayer. These words are used in both Office and Mass in reference to the Apostles, and therefore to all who share in the Apostolic work of teaching *Christ and Him crucified* [1].

(19) *Mémores erunt nóminis
Tui in omni generatióne et
generatiónem.*

*They shall be mindful of
Thy Name from generation to
generation.*

Thy name. That *name* which was prophesied in Josue, the leader of the children of Israel into the promised land ; still further honoured by Jesus, the son of Josedech, the high priest, him who stood before the Lord, Satan standing at his right hand to resist him [2] ; and lastly, as foretold by the angel to St. Joseph, as of Him who should save His people from their sins. It is of this *name* the Spouse speaks in the Canticles, *Let me hear Thy voice, for pleasant is Thy Name* [3]. Thus the Carthusian.

They shall be mindful. We have here the Church's promise to her Lord, calling all her children "Christians," and bringing His Name in at the close of all her petitions before the Father's throne.

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

[2] Zack. iii. 1.

[3] Cant. ii. 14.

(20) *Propterea pópuli confitebúntur Tibi in ætérnum : et in sæculum sæculi.* Wherefore shall the peoples give thanks to Thee for ever and ever.

The peoples ; that is, says the Carmelite, the ransomed peoples who have cast off the dross and the dregs of this world. Here is fulfilled what is written of the wise man : *The remembrance of Josias (Jesus) is like the composition of a perfume that is made by the art of the perfumer, it is sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine* [1] ; or in the same chapter : *So was Jesus, the son of Josedeck, Who in His days builded the house and set up a holy temple to the Lord which was prepared for everlasting glory* [2].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the God Who anoints the Christ ; and to the Son the King, Who is the Bridegroom of our souls ; and to the Holy Ghost the heavenly Unction, the Spirit Who saith to the Bride, *Come* [3].

ANTIPHON.

Adjuvavit eam Deus vultu suo : Deus in medio ejus, non commovébitur. God shall help her with His regard : God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved.

If the last antiphon shadowed forth the spiritual beauty of the Spouse of the Lamb, and pre-eminently that of our ever dear and blessed Lady, the present one, which is also taken from its own Psalm, gives us the source of it all. *He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden* [4], sang our Lady in the joy of the Visitation, confessing that it was through no merit of her own that she was chosen to the peerless dignity of the Divine Maternity. Our good Master teaches us the same ; for when a woman in the crowd, lost in admiration at His teaching, called out, *Blessed the womb that bear Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck*, He turned and said, *Nay, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it* [5] ;

[1] Eccles. xlix. 1.

[2] *Ibid.* v. 14.

[3] Apoc. xxii. 17.

[4] Luke i. 48.

[5] Luke ii. 28.

meaning thereby that Mary had been chosen to be His Mother by the free choice of God ; but it was by her hearing the Word of God, when spoken by the angel, by her free and generous consent, by her sincere submission of her whole being to the designs of her Maker, that she merited blessings. Her ceaseless union with God, ever keeping the *Word of God in her heart*, that is, fashioning herself upon the model of her divine Son, and making Him live in her, kept her immovable ; so that though the storms came, and the wind blew, and the rain beat upon that house, it stood—for it was founded on a Rock [1].

PSALM XLV.

Title : For the Sons of Core.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ causeth the soul to rejoice by His spiritual strength. The Prophet speaks of Christ to the Church and the same Lord Christ speaks to the same Church. The voice of the Apostles. The voice of the Faithful.

Venerable Bede : That Christ appears in the midst of the Church which he hath founded as on a most solid Rock. And from that *the rivers of the flood thereof*, the multitude of them that believe are invited to behold the miracles of the Divine Power ; or that might which breaketh the bow and snappeth the spear in sunder [2].

(1) *Deus noster refugium et
virtus : adjutor in tribulationi-
bus, quæ invenérunt nos nimis.*

*Our God is refuge and
strength, a Helper in the
troubles which have fallen
exceeding heavily upon us.*

Our God. The One who shares our nature, the *Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous* [3].

Refuge. Here we have the Rock ; *now the Rock was Christ* [4]—in whose cleft Side we may hide ourselves until

[1] Matt. vii. 25.

[2] A recent writer called this Psalm "a song of holiness, a guide along the pathway to the land that is very far off" (Isa. xxxiii. 17).

[3] 1 John ii. 1.

[4] 1 Cor. x. 4.

calamity is passed, according to that saying : *The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats, and so are the stony rocks for the conies* [1] ; and again : *The conies are but a feeble folk, yet they make their houses in the rock* [2]. The words of our Saviour are the *refuge* of the soul in all temptations, as we say in that beautiful prayer, the *Anima Christi* : "Within Thy wounds O hide me" [3].

Strength. In the Lord God is everlasting strength [4] ; and His *strength* is communicated to us by that grace in which we can do all things.

Helper. The word does not mean one who does all the work for us, but one who assists our own efforts and by his strength makes up for our weakness. We must do our part, but *Be not far from me, O Lord : O my strength, haste Thee to help me* [5].

(2) *Propterea non timébimus dum turbábitur terra : et transferéntur montes in cor maris.*

Therefore we will not fear when the earth is shaken : and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

(3) *Sonuérunt, et turbátæ sunt aquæ eórum : cónturbáti sunt montes in fortitúdine ejus.*

Their waters rage and swell : the mountains are shaken at the tempest of the same.

This Psalm is used in the Office of Many Martyrs, of those who went through the deep waters of affliction, who were tossed by a sea of pain, thereby to pass into the eternal calm and the quiet haven where they would be. Some see in these *mountains* the Apostles. They did indeed *shake at the tempest* when *they all forsook him and fled* [6] ; the highest and most glorious summit of all trembled at the voice of one poor servant-maid, and much more have lesser saints been, for the while, utterly carried away with the same sudden outbursts of tempest, and *carried into the midst of the sea of doubt* and

[1] Ps. ciii. 18.

[2] Prov. xxx. 26.

[3] This prayer is often called the "Prayer of St. Ignatius," on account of that saint's devotion to it. It is of much earlier origin, and some writers say that St. Thomas was the author.

[4] Isaias xxvi. 4.

[5] Ps. xxi. 20.

[6] Matt. xxvi. 56.

temptation. So the Carmelite. Other commentators, such as St. Athanasius, see in the *mountains* carried into the midst of the sea difficulties of all kinds which are swept away by prayer, more especially evil spirits, those *mountains* of pride, cast out by the mighty hand of God. And yet in the general confusion of this life, they liken the faithful soul to the halcyon, a bird that not only brings her own peace into the rage of the storm, but there also nourishes her young, cradling them, as it were, on the foaming waves. So have the billows of persecution cradled many a martyr and confessor till the time came he should go home; and of no one is this truer than of our ever dear and blessed Lady in that martyrdom which made her Queen of Martyrs. The Angelical takes it very mystically. *Waters*, he says, signify prophecy; their being troubled is interpreted of the frustration and confusion of heathen prophets and soothsayers, according to that saying: *I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent* [1].

(4) *Flúminis impetus lætíficât civitâtem Dei : sanctificâvit tabernáculum suum Altíssimus.*

The fury of the river maketh glad the City of God : the Most High hath made His tabernacle holy.

The very fierceness of the storm of tribulation is a cause of rejoicing in the City of God; for it is only those *who come out of much tribulation and wash their robes and make them white in the Blood of the Lamb*, that are arrayed in white, and stand before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple [2]. This *fury of the waters* is that which Ezekiel beheld in vision: these waters that came down from the right side of the house, and rising first to the ankles, then as the prophet passed onward, to the knees, even to the loins, and then became a river which he could not pass; for the waters were rising, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over [3]. We may also see in this, with the Angelical, the river of grace which burst forth from Mount Calvary, those streams which branched off hither and thither *to satisfy the waste ground and to cause the bud of the tender herb to spring*

[1] Isaias xxix. 14.

[2] Apoc. vii. 14-15.

[3] Cf. Ezekiel xlvii. 1, &c.

forth [1]. *O fountain of gardens, well of living waters, streams from Lebanon* [2]; ye, *the nether springs* [3] of this world, bring to us something of the loveliness and peace of those *upper springs* [4], beside which the fair flock of Christ now feeds and lies down, none making them afraid. Or, with St. Ambrose and St. Bernard, we may understand the verse of the *River of the Water of Life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of the Lamb* [5]. And then the *fury* or rush of that water shall indeed *make glad the City of God*, the House not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where is the Temple of Life that beareth twelve manner of fruits and yieldeth her fruit every month [6]. There is another obvious interpretation to this verse. The *fury* of the flood of sorrow which overwhelmed the Queen of Martyrs, never caused her, the City of God, in which He was pleased to dwell, to lose for a single moment the interior joy which made her ever keep singing in her heart the *Magnificat*. The very *fury* of the flood was an increase of joy, thrilling her with a grief beyond compare, as it did, yet it was happiness also; for in all she saw God's holy Will, and knew that He was doing it.

The Most High hath made His Tabernacle holy. In tribulation and sorrow there is a hallowing influence, *for whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son He receiveth* [7]. Great mystery of suffering! Eighth Sacrament! We can only understand thee when we look at the Crucified One! In proportion to God's love is the chastening. Far be it from us to look upon it as a punishment. It is a refining of the gold, a casting out of the dross. So our ever dear and blessed Lady, of all creatures the nearest to God, was chastened above all others in the mystical sea of sorrows, and by this means God's *tabernacle* within her was made *holy*. The knowledge of this truth explains St. Teresa's cry, Either to suffer or to die; St. Mary Magdalen of Pazzi's, More suffering O Lord; and that mystical thirst for sufferings which characterises so many of the saints.

[1] Job xxxviii. 27.

[2] Cant. iv. 15.

[3] Josue xv. 19.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] Apoc. xxii. 1.

[6] *Ibid.* 2.

[7] Heb. xii. 6.

(5) *Deus, in médio ejus,
non commovēbitur : adjuvābit
eam Deus mane dilicūlo.*

*God is in the midst of her,
she shall not be moved : God
shall help her, and that right
early.*

God is in the midst of her. So He was in the beginning : *The Tree of Life in the midst of the Garden* [1] ; thus when Paradise was lost. So He was afterwards when the second and better Tree of Life was set up between the penitent and the impenitent on Mount Calvary ; thus when Paradise was regained. So in the ancient Tabernacle when the visible manifestation of God's presence, the Shekinah, rested between the Cherubim ; so also in that Temple, of which it is said : *The glory of the latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former* [2] ; for there His blessed feet trod, Who, as the Psalmist says, *wrought salvation in the midst of the earth* [3]. Of course the verse is also to be taken of her of whom was born *Jesus Who is called the Christ* [4] ; and of the nine months of overflowing grace and love when Mary had in her midst her God [5].

And that right early. Therefore notice that all the great deliverances wrought in Holy Scripture were wrought so *early* as to have been brought to pass in the middle of the night. So Gideon, with his pitchers and lamps against the Midianites ; so Saul, when he went forth against Nahash the Ammonite ; so Josue when he went up to succour Gideon ; so Sampson when he carried off in triumph the gates of Gaza ; so also the allied kings under the guidance of Eliseus in their expedition against the Moabites, when they, according to God's command, filled the wilderness with ditches, and then beheld their enemies drawn to their destruction by the reflection of the rising sun upon the water. But in a deeper and truer sense we see here the *early* prophecies of that Eternal

[1] Gen. ii. 9.

[3] Ps. lxxiii. 12.

[2] Agg. ii. 9.

[4] Matt. i. 16.

[5] As an old hymn, *Novæ lucis hodie*, has it :—

“ The Monarch entered the hall
Of His sacred home alone ;
The steadfast gate is closed to all
With the key of Solomon.

Morning to which there shall be no Night ; that Eternal Spring to which there shall be no Autumn. So the Carmelite. The Angelical tells us here is to be seen the difference between the help of God and the help of man. The first is in time ; though not before the time ; the other so often late, late in hope, late in promise, and late in effect.

(6) <i>Conturbátæ sunt gentes, et inclináta sunt regna : dedit vocem suam, mota est terra.</i>	<i>The nations make much ado, and the kingdoms are moved : He hath showed His voice, and the earth shall melt away.</i>
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Notice here the two external enemies of men, says Father Lorin : *the heathen*, that is, the world ; *the kingdoms*, that is, the powers and principalities of the evil one.

But God hath showed His voice. First we can refer it to the day of Pentecost, when God showed His voice, not as at Sinai, from afar off, from the summit of the mountains, but in the room where the Apostles were gathered together ; and showed it not in dreadful lightnings, but in quiet tongues of flame ; showed it, not so as to terrify the multitudes : *Let not God speak to us lest we die* [1], but so as to allure them to the unity of the Faith. Thus the Carthusian. St. John Chrysostom observes : The punishment of tongues dispersed men, the gift of tongues brought them when dispersed together again. And if we ask why it should be said that *God hath showed His voice*, rather than that God hath caused *His voice* to be heard, the Carthusian tells us that to speak with Him is to act, to utter a command to be obeyed : *He spoke and they were made* [2]. So that His order may be as truly said to be seen as to be done. And then most truly of all, as Peter Lombard [3], the Master of the Sentences, teaches ; we speak of a visible word, of a Word that *was made flesh and dwelt among us* [4].

And the earth shall melt away. And herein those mediæval writers who have looked forward to the consummation of all

[1] Ex. xx. 19.

[2] Ps. xxxii. 9.

[3] Bishop of Paris (1164). He was Master of St. Thomas, the Angelical. His works are in Migne, P. L., vols. cxci., cxcii.

[4] John i. 14.

things, seem to themselves to find not the destruction of the present world, but its regeneration and transfiguration into that new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. *It shall melt away.* But that which melts is not lost, only re-cast.

(7) *Dóminus virtútum nobiscum : suscēptor noster Deus Jacob.* *The Lord of Hosts is with us : the God of Jacob is our upholder.*

He, the Captain of the Lord's host, is with us, that we may overcome our Jericho, in that case to become, as the name implies, a "City of Palm Trees" to us by the victory it enabled us to win [1]. He, the Lord, Who caused the mountains round Dothan to be *full of chariots of fire and horses of fire* [2], for the defence of His prophet ; He Who sent one of His host to smite in a night one hundred four-score and five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians. But notice under what character as regards ourselves : *The God of Jacob.* Now *Jacob* is by interpretation a "supplanter" [3] or wrestler. Our *upholder* He is only when we have wrestled with Him in prayer, as did the patriarch ; wrestled, says St. Jerome, in the night of affliction as he did in the darkness ; wrestled by the brook of penitence as he did by the ford of Jabbok ; wrestled alone as he did when he sent his family forward ; wrestled and said, as he of old, "*I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me*" [4]. The Carmelite and the Carthusian, however, take these words in another sense, that is, we must be supplanters of wickedness, strugglers against and conquerors of temptation, if *the God of Jacob* is to defend us.

(8) *Veníte, et vidéte ópera Dómini, quæ pósuit prodígia super terram : auferens bella usque ad finem terræ.*

O come hither and see the works of the Lord, what wonders He hath placed on the earth : Making war to cease even unto the end of the earth.

(9) *Arcum cónteret, et confringet arma : et scuta combúret igni.*

He breaketh the bow and cutteth the weapons in sunder : and burneth the shield in the fire.

[1] Cf. Josue v. 14.
[2] 4 Kings vi. 17.

[3] Gen. xxvii. 36.
[4] Gen. xxxii. 26.

The Carmelite remarks the difference between this invitation and that of Psalm xciv. One to come and sing, and the other to come and see. The two are separated on earth and only to be joined in Heaven. To *see* here is to see sadness, iniquity, faithlessness, impurity, every sin. To *see* there is to see not only the Gates of Pearls, not only the Streets of Gold, and the Sea of Glass; but to learn the New Song of all the Redeemed, to hear it, and to be joined to that strain which knits together the angelic inhabitants of Heaven, and those who, not only through much tribulation, but also through much sin, have been redeemed from the earth. And notice that the invitation is only to those who shall be counted worthy to enter into that blessed place. *Come hither*; for, as St. Leo the Great says, in what other place can the works of the Lord be so fully seen as in that where they are perfectly glorious, gloriously perfect, where they know neither limit to the efficiency, nor measure to their beauty? And who are they that shall be accounted worthy of that invitation? Read further and observe how he limits the call.

What wonders hath He placed upon the earth? This, that these present bodies, formed out of clay, moulded from earth, must one day say to corruption: *Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister* [1]; must be utterly taken to pieces, must be like the grain of wheat, which, except it die, yieldeth no increase.

Making war to cease. And therefore is He rightly called the *Prince of Peace*, therefore rightly at His birth was peace proclaimed by the angels, at His departure was peace bequeathed to the Apostles.

The bow, the spear, the chariots. A trinity of evil here, as so often. The *bow*; some take of the fiery darts of temptation, injected, as it were, from a distance by evil spirits into the fancy. The *spears*; of the hand-to-hand fight with the world that every faithful soul must carry on. The *shields*; those earthly means of safety on which all are apt to lean, forgetful of the God from Whom alone true help can come.

(10) *Vacáte, et vidéte quóniam Ego sum Deus: exaltabor in géntibus, et exaltábor in terra.*

(11) *Dóminus virtútum nobiscum: suscéptor noster Deus Jacob.*

Be still and see, for I am God: I will be exalted among the Gentiles, and I will be exalted on the earth.

The Lord of Hosts is with us: the God of Jacob is our upholder.

Be still. Put not your trust in human means of safety, see the works of the Lord and know that He has made Himself our refuge and strength. *Be still* from idle fretting, from profitless worrying.

See that I am God. The past tells us that He is the God Whose wisdom reacheth from one end to another, mightily and sweetly ordereth all things [1], and that His Hand has ever been over us. So, *be still and see that I am God.*

I will be exalted. This double declaration is to be compared with the double declaration of our Lord: *All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth* [2]; or still better: *I will be exalted among the heathen*, namely, by the preaching of that Cross whereon the Son of Man was lifted up.

And I will be exalted on the earth, the new earth, that is, the Land of the Living, the earth where the saints shall reign, the *earth* where there shall be no more sea.

The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our upholder. This is a repetition of verse 7, and has been already commented upon. But coming again at the end of this Psalm of confidence, it seems to sum up all that has been said, and with greater force insists upon the Divine truth that God, and He alone, is our Refuge and Strength. And it is as well that this should be repeated; for although the past teaches us this truth, yet we are apt in the darkness of the hour of trial to forget it and cling for safety to that *arm of flesh* [3], instead of to the Hand of Him Who walketh upon the waters and chideth us for our little faith.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who is our Refuge and Strength: and to the Son Whose City the River of Life maketh glad: and to the Holy Ghost, the God Who is in the midst of Her.

[1] Wisdom viii. 1.

[2] Matt. xxvii. 18.

[3] 2 Paralip xxxii. 8.

ANTIPHON.

<i>Sicut lætantium omnium</i>	<i>As of all rejoicing ones our</i>
<i>nostrum habitatio est in te</i>	<i>dwelling is in thee, O holy</i>
<i>sancta Dei Génitrix.</i>	<i>Mother of God.</i>

This antiphon is taken from the Psalm that follows, and is directly applied to our ever dear and blessed Lady. She is called in the Litany "The Cause of our joy;" and the spiritual Sion, the Church, rejoices, for her Founder comes from her, and by her. As in the first antiphon of this Nocturn we had drawn out the beauty of the Bridegroom and the excellence of the Bride, and in the second the secret of this excellence, the grace of God; so here the glorious results and our share therein. The fuller meaning of the verse will be drawn out in the course of the Psalm.

PSALM LXXXVI.

Title : A Psalm or Song for the Sons of Core.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ loves the gates of His Church set upon the holy hills more than all the tabernacles of Jacob. The voice of the Apostles touching the Church. The voice of the Prophet, in the Holy Ghost, to the Apostles. The voice of Christ, the Holy One, to the Apostles touching the Church and the merits of the saints.

Venerable Bede : The sons of Core signify Christians to whom the Prophet proclaims the City of God to increase their yearnings for such glory. Otherwise : nearly all the psalms which are inscribed *For the sons of Core* are full of rejoicing, for they do not imitate the sins of their fathers and take to themselves the fire of lust, strange to the Lord, but loving that which the Lord desireth, speak glorious things concerning the City of God. In the first part the Prophet proclaims the heavenly City. In the second part, the Lord our Saviour declares her future belief by referring to various names, and reproaches the Synagogue because she knew not God, because the devout faith of the Gentiles believed. The third part in one verse toucheth on the blessedness of the world to come,

and these parts are divided from each other by the interposition of pauses [1].

(1) <i>Fundamenta ejus in</i>	<i>His foundations are upon</i>
<i>móntibus sanctis : diligit</i>	<i>the holy hills : the Lord loveth</i>
<i>Dóminus portas Sion super</i>	<i>the gates of Sion more than all</i>
<i>omnia tabernacula Jacob.</i>	<i>the dwellings of Jacob.</i>

The City that is set upon a hill is God's building, not man's [2]; and so we read in another place, *The Lord hath founded Sion* [3]. The abruptness of the opening verse, remarks St. Augustine, suggests that something must have preceded, not of necessity uttered aloud, but pondered in the mind of the tuneful citizen, who, filled with the Holy Ghost and thinking with love and desire of the City, breaks out in this wise, and tells us of that heavenly Jerusalem whose foundation is upon the holy hills, the Apostles and prophets, whose Corner-stone is Christ, none other foundation than Whom can any man lay [4]. The word *holy* is not superfluous, but, as St. Bruno the Carthusian says, distinguishes the hills of the mystical Jerusalem from those of the mystical Babylon, which are worldly power and ungodly wisdom.

The Lord loveth the gates of Sion. The gates are twofold : the Apostles and their successors, by whose agency men enter into the Church ; and the Sacraments, which are the privileges of heavenly citizenship. God loves them *more than all the dwellings of Jacob*, says the Carmelite with the Carthusian, because the saints and sacraments of the New Law are higher than those of old ; the Church, far more noble than the tabernacles of Moses and David, than the temples of Solomon and Zorobabel ; for the Law was only *a shadow of the good things to come and not the very image of the things* [5]. There are, observes Perez, four principal gates to the Holy City : Baptism, to enter in ; Penance, to return by ; Holy Order, to ascend by ; and Extreme Unction, by which we go out ; while the twelve articles of the Creed are at once, like the

[1] A recent writer styles this Psalm : "The voice of the Holy Ghost touching that City of God, of whom it is written in verse five : *A Man was born in her and the Most High founded her.*"

[2] Matt. v. 14.

[3] Isaías xiv. 32.

[4] Eph. ii. 20 ; 1 Cor. iii. 11.

[5] Heb. x. 1.

Apostles, foundations and gates, each a single pearl of great price [1]; fairer and more blessed than these tents of Jacob which Balaam, wondering, saw and blessed [2]. Again, the verse may be applied to our ever dear and blessed Lady, herself sprung from the holy and lofty race of Hebrew saints, prophets and kings, and loved by God more than all other virgin souls, dwelling in the *tabernacles* of pure bodies which wrestle, as *Jacob*, against all sin.

(2) *Gloriosa dicta sunt de te, Glorious things are said of
civitas Dei. thee, O City of God.*

How *glorious* does not appear till we recall the glowing language of the Apocalypse and that of the many Christian hymns, as to the joys of the Eternal City; for in this Psalm the Church Militant and Triumphant are so blended in idea into one, that it is impossible to sever them or contemplate them independently of each other. O blessed land of Paradise, exclaims St. Bernard, O blessed land of gladness, for which I sigh in this vale of mourning, where wisdom without ignorance, memory without forgetfulness, understanding without error, reason without darkness, will shine! Blessed are they who dwell there and who will praise God for ever. Amen. So, too, are *glorious things* said of her, the mystical *City of God*, wherein the great King deigned to tarry, and endowed with all graces to make her a fitting abode for Himself. Note, moreover, that every soul is, in its degree, a *City of God* placed high on the Rock which is Christ; and having the gates of mind and body ever ready to open to the Lord when He knocketh, but barred closely against His foes. Of such an one shall *glorious things be said*, even: *Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord* [3]; and this other *glorious thing*: *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the Temple of God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the Name of My God, and the name of the City of My God, which is the new Jerusalem* [4]. St. Bonaventure remarks that the Church has in this Psalm six titles: foundation, mountain, Sion, holy, gates, city. The first,

[1] Apoc. xxi. 21.

[2] Num. xxiv. 5.

[3] Matt. xxv. 21.

[4] Apoc. iii. 12.

because of her firmness ; the second, by reason of her exaltation ; the third, because of her looking for her God ; the fourth, from her grace ; the fifth, to denote her security and readiness to admit ; and the last tells us of the gathering together of the multitude within her.

(3) <i>Memor ero Rahab, et Babylónis sciéntium Me.</i>	<i>I will be mindful of Rahab and Babylon, those that know Me.</i>
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This verse is put into the mouth of God Himself. *Rahab*, interpreted by St. Jerome as meaning "pride," or the "haughty one," means Egypt, which is so styled by Isaias : *Art thou not it that cut off Rahab ?* [1]. Accordingly, we have a prophecy of the same seer to the like effect : *And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day* [2]. How gloriously that promise was fulfilled the long list of the great saints of the church of Alexandria and of the Thebaid may tell us for Egypt ; while the roll of the martyrs under the fierce persecution of Sapor, who ruled where the king of *Babylon* once held sway, is not less eloquent for Mesopotamia. Accordingly, the verse is but another form of Isaias' prophecy : *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land, where the Lord of Hosts shall bless saying, Blessed be Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel Mine inheritance* [3]. But nearly all the old commentators suppose that *Rahab*, the harlot of Jericho [4], is here named, and framed their interpretations accordingly. Seeing here the calling of the Gentiles, they point out how *Rahab* was the type of all converted sinners thronging amidst publicans and harlots into the Kingdom of Heaven, while Scribes and Pharisees remained without, still in that fated Jericho, whence the true Josue delivers them that trust in Him. Thus St. Augustine. *Rahab*, too, meaning "spaciousness," is a type, says St. Bruno, of those that once walked along the broad way of destruction, but receiving and hearkening to the Apostles, messengers of the Conqueror, entered

[1] li. 9.

[2] xix. 12.

[3] Isa. xix. 24.

[4] Josue ii. 1.

on the narrow way when the world sinks in ruin at the sound of the Archangel's trumpet. And *Babylon*, the city of "confusion," is named, too, because from it there is a steady tide of emigration of sinners justified by grace and drawn into the fellowship of Jerusalem.

(4) *Ecce alienigenæ, et Tyrus, et pópulus Æthiópum, hi fuérunt illic.* Behold, the strangers, and Tyre, and the people of the Ethiopian, these were there.

Strangers, that is, the Gentiles who are *alien from the commonwealth of Israel* [1].

Tyre denotes those in the "strait" of penitential sorrow, and the *Ethiopians* such as are black with sin and long in spiritual darkness. *These were there*, that is, these nations were admitted by the New Birth unto that City whose deadliest foes they once had been.

(5) *Numquid Sion dicet : Homo, et Homo natus est in ea : et Ipse fundávit eam Altissimus ?* And shall not Sion say : A Man, yea a Man, was born in her, and the Highest Himself hath stablished her ?

St. Augustine explains it of Christ Himself, the Most High, Who founded Sion, choosing her for His earthly mother, and condescending to be born in her. And how these words apply to our ever dear and blessed Lady is clear to all. Haymo [2] explains these words as a cry of wonder on the Psalmist's part, as though he were saying : I know that glorious things are said of thee, O City of God, but is it possible that thou canst ever declare that the Man has been born in thee, that the Most High has deigned to become incarnate ? Or as others, with Albert the Great, take it : Will any man say to Sion, *a Man*, even the Most High Who founded thee, is *born in her* ?

(6) *Dóminus narrábit in scriptúris pópulorum, et príncipum : horum, qui fuérunt in ea.* The Lord shall rehearse it in the writings of the people and the princes : of those who were in her.

[1] Eph. ii. 12.

[2] Haymo, monk and bishop of Halberstadt (834) wrote a *Pia, brevis ac dilucida in omnes psalmos explanatio* (Migne, P. L., vol. cxvi.).

Euthymius urges that this verse has reference to the use made of the Old Testament by Christ Himself to prove His mission and authority ; for St. Luke tells us there was delivered unto Him the Book of the Prophet Isaias ; and when He had opened the scroll He found the place where it was written : *The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor* [1]. This sort of scripture of the prophets he calls the *writings of the peoples*, or of the *princes*, because they were given to the nations and rulers of the Jews, and were thus the peculiar possession of them that were born in Sion. Others take the *writings of the peoples* as meaning the New Testament intended for the unlearned and simple, not merely for scholars and philosophers, but which are nevertheless, as the Carthusian reminds us, the *writings of the princes*, too ; of the Apostles, evangelists, and great doctors of the Church ; for these are they of whom it is written : *The princes of the people are joined unto the God of Abraham* [2].

(7) *Sicut lætántium ómnium habitátio est in te.* *As of all rejoicing ones, the dwelling is in thee.*

What does this *as* mean ? asks St. Augustine. It tells us that our earthly joys are only a faint image of those delights which as yet we know not, and that the words our ignorance forces us to employ are quite inadequate to describe the gladness of heaven. The *dwelling*, too, is there, not the mere tabernacle of Jacob, shifting and uncertain in place, but eternally unshaken on the lofty hills of the Golden City. And lastly, they take the verse of our ever dear and blessed Lady as the holy place within which abode our true Isaac, our mystic "laughter," and in whom, therefore, the joy of the whole earth was for a time contained ; in which sense the words are used in the Antiphon.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the Most High, founder of Sion :
 Glory be to the Son, the Man Who was born in her : glory be
 to the Holy Ghost from Whom flow all streams which water
 the Paradise of God.

[1] iv. 17.

[2] Ps. xlv. 9.

VERSICLE AND RESPONSE.

*V. Diffusa est grátia in
lábiis tuis.*

*Grace is poured out on thy
lips.*

*R. Propterea benedixit te
Deus in ætérnum.*

*Wherefore God hath blessed
thee for ever.*

As the Psalms of this Nocturn have been occupied with the beauty and excellence of the Bride, these last words taken from Psalm xlv., and there spoken of the Bridegroom, are here taken and "turned" to the Bride, summing up, as it were, the whole spirit of this Nocturn ; reminding us once more of the *therefore*, that is, of the reason why God so blessed and exalted her.

THIRD NOCTURN.

For Wednesdays and Saturdays.

ANTIPHON.

*Gaude Maria Virgo, cunctas
hæreses sola interemisti in
univérso mundo.*

*Rejoice, O Virgin Mary, for
thou alone hast destroyed all
heresies in the whole world.*

The spirit of this Nocturn is that of praising God for the work in the Church which He has appointed to our ever dear and blessed Lady. The Mother is now as she used to be in those sweet days of Bethlehem, Egypt and Nazareth when she dwelt daily face to face with her God and Son. She was then His guardian. She continues this office. If the Sacred Humanity no longer needs a Mother's loving care, Jesus wills that His mystical Body, the Church, should look to her in all needs and troubles, certain that it will never ask amiss. So, in a special way, is she the guardian of her Son, the Divine Truth, and thus the great destroyer of false doctrine. Seekers after Jesus will find Him as the Magi found Him: *And they found the Child with Mary His mother* [1]. When Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople (450), began to attack the Divinity of our Lord, he denied Mary's title of Mother of God; and it was the glorious vindication of this name that secured the truth,

[1] Matt. ii. 11.

that Jesus, her Son, is very God and very Man. The Antiphon sounds like a cry of triumph after the Council of Ephesus, which condemned the Nestorian heresy.

PSALM XCV.

Title : A Song of David : when the House was burnt after the Captivity.

Tomasi : That Christ, reigning from the Tree amidst the nations, is to be shown in His second Coming. The voice of His Apostles to the people concerning the confusion of the idols and the calling of the Church. The voice of the Church calling. The prophet concerning the first and second Coming of Christ.

Venerable Bede : As to the letter, the time signifies that when the Temple was restored at Jerusalem or the loosing of the Babylonian captivity. But spiritually the destroyed House is built when, after the captivity of sin, the soul recovers the way of truth. For that House, to wit, the Church Universal, wherein Christ dwells, is always being built up with living stones, until the number of the Elect shall be fulfilled at the end of the world. In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet exhorts the general body to sing unto the Lord and to preach our Lord's Incarnation throughout the world, because He is very Lord above all Gods. In the second place, he warns the various nations first, to offer themselves, then to discharge the office of preaching ; and he makes a mention of our Lord's two Comings, that wherein He was judged by the world, and that wherein He is to judge the world.

(1) *Cantate Dómino cánticum novum : cántate Dómino omnis terra.*

O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the whole earth.

This *new song*, written for the dedication of the Second Temple after the Captivity, is a simple recasting of the latter part of David's own Psalm for the bringing up of the Ark out of the house of Obed-Edom to the Tabernacle in Jerusalem [1]. The alterations are very slight and do not introduce any fresh

ideas ; and the absence of any special reference in the earlier form to the Ark, or in this to the new building, causes St Augustine to apply it to the spiritual kingdom of Christ. St. John Chrysostom applies this Psalm particularly to the Church Militant ; others of the Eastern Church, such as St. Basil, to the two Comings of Christ. But the great majority agree in taking it of the gradual rising in the heavens of that building of living stones made without hands, eternal, the Church Triumphant. This is the City of God, which rises like the walls of Thebes in the old legend, to the sound of sweet music : built up with song, founded on belief, raised high by hope, completed in love, dedicated at the end of the year. It is a *new song* for all of us Gentiles, in that we sing the song of Baptism which brings us to regeneration ; of repentance, which cleanses us afresh when we fall ; of glory yet to come when all things shall be made new. It is *new* in celebrating the Incarnation, because then God *created a new thing, in that a woman shall compass a man* [1]. It reminds us of that *New Song* in Heaven which no one can learn save the Redeemed [2]. Our old songs, says the Carthusian, were those of pride, of gluttony, of luxury, in hope of gain, prosperity, or harm to others ; our *new song* is of praise, reverence, and obedience and love to God, in newness of life, in the spirit which quickeneth ; no longer in the letter that killeth, but that which keepeth the New Commandment, that we love one another ; not with the narrow patriotism and fellow-feeling of a small tribe, but with a citizenship which embraces *all the whole earth*.

(2) *Cantáte Dómino, et benedicite Nómini Ejus : annuntiáte de die in diem Salutáre Ejus.*

Sing unto the Lord and bless His Name : be telling of His Salvation from day to day.

In this three-fold injunction to *sing unto the Lord* commentators bid us see the worship of the blessed Trinity ; and Haymo further tells us to note that there are, moreover, just three New Songs in the Gospel added to the ancient Psalter

[1] Jeremiah xxxi. 22.

[2] Apoc. xiv. 3.

and Canticles : the *Benedictus*, *Magnificat*, and *Nunc Dimittis* daily sung in the Church.

And praise His name. Herein the Unity of the Divine Essence is denoted, says Remigius, as the Trinity of Persons by the three-fold mention of the Lord which proceeds. It is not enough to *sing* unless we also *bless* the Lord's Name ; for it is, alas, possible to have songs wherein that Name is mentioned without reverence or love. We *bless* His Name by a pure and holy life, because thereby we make His honour known to others, and bring them to others, and bring them to submit themselves to His love. And it may be that here only His Name, and not Himself in very deed is specified, because, as the Carmelite remarks, the Word was not yet made flesh ; and in that case the Name we are bidden to bless is that divinely appointed One, the holy Name of Jesus.

Be telling of His salvation, is said first of all to the Apostles and then to all those who are carrying on their work of bringing souls to Christ. *His salvation.* Beneath these words in the Hebrew, as something precious and holy, lies the sacred Name of Jesus, our Saviour, or *salvation*.

From day to day. For He is Light of Light, very God of very God ; so that when we teach the Father truly we must teach the Son, and when we teach the Son we must teach the Mother. Our Lord is to be praised always in the light of *day* ; not in the darkness of sin, but in the brightness of virtue. Let Him, the Sun of Righteousness, always rise in thy soul that the New Light may ever spring up in thee. Praise Him from *day to day* in the Old Testament and in the *New* ; the two days which make but one Light, and in both of which He shines. Praise Him, says Remigius, not in the Old alone, like the Jews, nor in the New alone, like the Manichees ; but remember that the Apostles went out, two by two, as preachers of His Gospel. Praise Him from strength to strength, from one bright lesson of power and holiness to another yet brighter. Praise Him and *tell of His salvation*, literally, each day as it comes ; that none may rise and set without His Kingdom being extended ; praise Him from one cross, or one visitation of His boundless love to another cross, the proof that He is mindful of us ;

and lastly, praise Him from the Day of the Gospel to the yet brighter Day of the Resurrection.

(3) *Annuntiáte inter gentes* *Declare His glory unto the*
glóriam Ejus, in ómnibus *heathen : and His wonders*
pópulis mirabilia Ejus. *unto all people.*

His glory may here be taken to denote the Godhead of Christ as *His salvation* tells us of the work of His Manhood. St. Justin, and many others, take the words to refer to the Hour of the Passion wherein the Son of man was glorified [1] ; that His people might henceforth glory in nothing save His Cross. It is His *glory* which is to be proclaimed ; the loving beauty, the attractiveness of His Gospel, the lavish promise to repentant sinners, the blessedness of heaven, and the easiness of salvation in God's most dear Fatherhood. These we must *declare* rather than threats, menaces and terrors, which harden men's hearts and make them doubt of God's love. *His glory* : and taking this with *His wonder*, our thought naturally goes out to that *memorial of His wonders* [2], the most holy Eucharist. Our Divine Lord is present there all glorious, immortal and incapable of suffering ; He is there the Living Christ, though shrouded beneath the sacramental veils. The thought then of *His glory* will bring us back and draw us to the feet of our Eucharistic King, and will unite us more and more with the worship that He is ever pouring forth to His Eternal Father.

(4) *Quóniam magnus Dó-* *For the Lord is great and*
minus, et laudábilis nimis : *to be praised exceedingly. He*
terribilis est super omnes deos. *is to be feared above all gods.*

St. Augustine points out that these words are spoken of that same Jesus Who came to us in all the helplessness of babyhood. Despise Him not ; though small, understand how great He is. He became little, because we were little ; but let His greatness be understood, and you shall become great in Him. So uprises the building of the house, so the very stones for the edifice increase and are lifted up.

To be praised exceedingly, that is, beyond the power of

[1] John xii. 23.

[2] Ps. cx. 4. See note 3, p. 54.

our faculties ; for what, says St. Augustine, can a little tongue do towards praising the Great God ? In saying *exceedingly* he suggests the thought : Ponder what I cannot utter, and when thou hast pondered it will be all too little. O Lord, says St. Anselm of Canterbury, Thou art not only He than Whom no greater can be the object of thought, but Thou art something which is greater than any thought ; and therefore *He is to be feared above all gods*, who are but the creatures of man's thoughts, those idols of the heathens which He can overthrow, or those earthly potentates which He sets up and pulls down at His will.

(5) <i>Quóniam omnes dii géntium dæmónia : Dóminus autem cælos fecit.</i>	<i>For all the gods of the heathen are but idols : but the Lord made the heavens.</i>
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Idols. The literal Hebrew means "nothings," mere phantasms, having no real existence ; and so the Apostle : *We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but One* [1]. But taking the word as *demons*, it seems to imply the graven images, the deified men and sacred animals of heathenism, implying, besides, the notion of evil and fraud as connected with the ancient oracles, which have been bound up with that word ever since the proclamation of Christianity.

But the Lord made the heavens. A claim on behalf of His almighty power, exceeding that made for their divinities by any of the heathen nations known to the ancient Jews ; inasmuch as they either accepted the heavens as itself a god, or left its origin doubtful, not knowing God as the Maker of all things. Mystically, the commentators explain, as usual, the *heavens* in this verse to denote the Apostles and other holy teachers, superior in spiritual power to the evil spirits against which they contended.

(6) <i>Conféssio, et pulchritúdo in conspéctu Ejus : sanctimónia, et magnificéntia in sanctifica- tíone Ejus.</i>	<i>Confession and beauty are in His sight : holiness and magnificence in His sancti- fication.</i>
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As the previous verse told us of the supreme power of God, so this one speaks of the royal pomp and dignity which attend Him : in Heaven, where He is encompassed by the shining ranks of the blessed spirits, or in His earthly Temple, with its adornment and stately ceremonial. St. Augustine takes the first word of this verse, *confession*, as signifying acknowledgment of sin, and points out how it precedes beauty, like washing and purifying is necessary before we can recognise the true grace of the features or loveliness of the complexion. He also bids us observe how *holiness*, as the only way to heaven, is the forerunner of *magnificence*, which can be attained there alone in His *sanctification*, that is, among the glorified saints ; whereas those who seek magnificence without holiness fall into destruction. The Carthusian says : In our true country there are in full perfection that *confession* of God's praise and glory, which is so imperfect here in the way towards heaven ; and that inner *beauty* of the soul, which is now marred and defaced by sin : because *in His sight*, in the Beatific Vision, there can be nothing defective, since the *holiness* and *magnificence* thereof surpass all words and imagination.

(6) *Afferte Dómino pátrix
géntium, afferte Dómino gló-
riam et honórem : afferte Dó-
mino gloriam nomini Ejus.*

*Ascribe unto the Lord O ye
kindreds of the peoples : as-
cribe unto the Lord glory and
honour : ascribe unto the Lord
the glory due to His Name.*

There is a peculiar force, observes Cassiodorus, in this phrase, *kindreds of the peoples*, much more than if we had the word *peoples* alone ; for in every nation there are at all times strangers, aliens, sojourners, abiding permanently, or for a time, but not reckoned amongst the natives ; while the phrase here includes all such, and provides that no one shall be shut out because of his origin. Bellarmine remarks that as it was the custom of the Jews to come up on great festivals to the Temple in Jerusalem, being divided into companies according to their tribes, so all the nations of the world are to do the like spiritually, by flocking into the Church of Christ with the triple inscription of glory and worship to the Eternal

Trinity as in the Song of the Ransomed in the Apocalypse. *The kindreds of the peoples* heard and obeyed this call when, in the Epiphany, the wise men ascribed *glory* to their God, offering Him frankincense, *power* to their King with gold, *honour* to the mighty Dead, with myrrh for His embalming. We can do the like in true repentance for our sins, says Cardinal Hugo, giving *glory* to God by contrition, as it is written: *My son, give, I pray thee, glory to the Lord God of Israel and make confession unto Him* [1]. *Power* by actual confession made in the strength of God's grace, and *honour* in making satisfaction, for the honour due to His name is impeached when His sons fall into sin.

(8) <i>Tóllite hóstias, et introi- te in átria Ejus : adoráte Dóminum in átrio sancto Ejus.</i>	<i>Bring hosts and come ye into His courts. O worship the Lord in His holy court.</i>
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The Hebrew word here represented by *hosts* is that which refers to the *Mincha*, or clean sacrifice of fine flour [2]. This, at once, reminds us of that most perfect means of ascribing glory, and power, and honour to God, the Mass, the one Sacrifice left when all others were abolished, that great Act in which Jesus is both Priest and Victim. To this Sacrifice we must add the living oblation of ourselves, our souls and bodies, the dedication of our faculties and powers, the offering of prayer, fasting, and alms deeds.

His courts. These may be taken as the local churches here on earth, *the place wherein Thy glory dwelleth* [3]; or the monastic houses of His chosen servants; or, with the Carthusian, the inner recesses of our own hearts when we withdraw into silence and prayer.

In His holy court, that is, the presence of God manifested in our Churches. Here we have the singular *court*—and in the former phrase it is in the plural, *courts*. The commentators give us two explanations: that we may pass from the many Patriarchs, seers, and Prophets of the Old Law, each being but an imperfect type, to the fulfilment of all in the One Man Who is the Court of God under the New

[1] Josias vii. 19.

[2] Exodus xxix. 2; Lev. ii. 1.

[3] Psalm xxv. 8.

Covenant ; and secondly, that we pass from the outer courts, that is, the Church Militant and the Church Suffering, into the one vast sanctuary of the Church Triumphant in heaven.

(9) *Commoveatur a fácie
Ejus univérſa terra : dicite in
géntibus quia Dóminus reg-
návít.*

*Let all the earth be moved
before His face : tell it out
among the heathen that the
Lord reigneth.*

Let all the earth be moved before His face. This is to be understood first of the stir and expectation which preceded the first Coming of Christ, so that the world was moved and shaken from its deeply-rooted error and turned to the Lord. Then, again, of the earthquake, when the pale, blood-stained Face of Jesus looked down on the earth He had just redeemed by His death. It may also be taken of the second Coming of Christ to judgment ; and of the alarm raised in the souls of earthly and carnal sinners at the thought of the wrath to come, so that they turn to repentance in fear and trembling of heart.

That the Lord reigneth. In the time of St. Justin, and as long after as St. Augustine, the reading of this phrase was : *The Lord hath reigned from the wood* ; and St. Justin charges the Jews with having cut out the latter words, as well as some other expressions in the Bible, as being too distinctly prophetic of Christ. Assuming the genuineness of the addition, the original reference is to the *wood* of the Ark of the Covenant, from which went forth the might, overthrowing Dagon, the idol of the Philistines, and over which brooded that mysterious manifestation of the Divine Presence, the Shekinah. The reference to the *wood* of the Cross is also clear ; and Holy Church embodies the words in the *Vexilla Regis* of Venantius Fortunatus [1].

Among the heathen. These tidings were to be spread, as the Jews refused to hear them. The proclamation that *the Lord reigneth* denotes not the beginning of His power and

[1] " Fulfilled is all that David told
In true prophetic song of old ;
Amidst the nations God, saith he,
Hath reigned and triumphed from the Tree.

rule, but the recognition of it in faith and worship. And observe, it was a heathen governor who made this proclamation by the very form of that Title which He set up on the Cross : *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews* [1].

(10) <i>Etenim corréxit orbem terræ qui non commovébitur : judicábit pópulos in æquitáte.</i>	<i>He hath corrected the round world, which shall not be moved. He shall judge the people righteously.</i>
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Many of the commentators argue that the Psalmist does not speak here of the first creation of Nature, but of the new creation of Grace, correcting and making anew what had been injured. According to the words of the Prophet, *the crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain* [2]. Christ came that He might *correct* mankind (aforetime corrupted) that it might never be moved. His Cross is the pillar of Humanity, on which that house is reared ; that house He built on the foundation of those Apostles whom He corrected after their doubt, by His Resurrection, and which He stablished firmly by the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, so that they should never be moved again.

He shall judge the people righteously. This is not spoken of the second Coming only, but of the first also ; as the words denote the whole course of Christ's providential government, the absolute righteousness of the laws which He has laid down in the Gospel for the guidance of mankind.

(11) <i>Læténtur cæli, et ex- súltet terra, commoveátur mare, et plenitúdo ejus ; gaudébunt campi, et ómnia quæ in eis sunt.</i>	<i>Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad : let the sea be moved and the fulness thereof. Let the fields be glad and all that are therein.</i>
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(12) <i>Tunc exsultábunt óm- nia ligna silvárum a fácie Dómini, quia venit : quóniam venit judicáre terram.</i>	<i>Then shall all the trees of the woods rejoice before the Lord, for He cometh : for He cometh to judge the earth.</i>
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These verses have been thus interpreted : *The heavens* represent, as we have said before, the Apostles and those who do the

[1] John xix. 19.

[2] Isaias xl. 4.

Apostles' work ; *the earth*, their hearers, drinking in the rain of doctrine ; while *the sea* denotessinners, ever restless, bitter, and barren ; *the fulness thereof*, the proud and wealthy who despise the Gospel. The *field* is in contrast to the sea, being level, stable, and fruitful, and thus a type of humble souls diligent in good works ; while *the trees of the woods* are the yet unreclaimed. Thus the Carmelite. Then, again, *the heavens* rejoiced at our Lord's Birth, because of His Divine Nature, and showed their gladness by the shining of a star and the songs of angels ; *the earth* was glad because of His Manhood ; *the sea* and all waters, because of their hallowing as the matter of Baptism ; the *fields*, because for three and thirty years the feet of God trod this earth of ours ; while *all the trees of the woods* rejoiced in that one of them was to be the instrument of man's redemption.

For He cometh ; for He cometh. In the two-fold use of the words *He cometh* may be seen a reference to the two Comings of Christ : that in which He came to judge between us and the enemy who held us in bondage ; and that Advent wherein He shall come again to reward and punish.

(13) <i>Judicabit orbem terræ in æquitâte, et pópulos in veri- tâte sua.</i>	<i>He shall judge the world with righteousness and the people in His truth.</i>
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Some note the distinction between the *world* and the *people* as implying the Gentiles and the Jews. He will judge in *righteousness*, as without any partiality or acceptance of persons ; and *in truth*, because He knows all things and cannot be deceived. Thus the Carthusian. And yet more, because He fulfils the promises made to His people, who shall be received into everlasting glory when the world is judged, and will then rejoice before the Lord, flourishing as green olive trees, no longer in the wild wood, but in the Paradise of heavenly bliss.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who is more to be feared than all gods ; Glory to the Son Who reigneth from the Tree ; Glory to the Holy Ghost Who is the beauty of holiness.

ANTIPHON.

*Dignare me laudare te, Grant that I may praise
Virgo sacrata : da mihi vir- thee, O hallowed Virgin : give
tutem contra hostes tuos. me strength against thy foes.*

The reason why we seek to praise our ever dear and blessed Lady is on account of the strength we receive through her to combat not only our enemies, but her foes also. Or, again, the highest praise we can give her is to use the grace she so abundantly procures for us from her Divine Son. As in our earthly combat each victory won is a praise to the trusty blade which served us so well, so each temptation vanquished is an act of praise to her. But as the praise, however, does not rest in the weapon, but goes on to the artist who made it, so our praise of Mary, the second Judith through whom we conquer our spiritual enemies, goes on and becomes the praise of the Maker to whose Name be laud in all things. The second office of our Lady towards the mystical Body is announced in this Antiphon. She is the giver of strength to those in combat; or, in other words, she is the divinely appointed channel of grace—"the Mother of Divine grace." Just as the neck is the ordinary channel of communication between the head and the members, so is our dear and blessed Lady between the Divine Head and the members of the Mystic Body.

PSALM XCVI.

Title : To David when his land was restored.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ, proclaimed by the voices of the heavens, is shown to the nations in the flesh. The voice of the Church concerning the Advent of Christ. For Praise. The voice of the Apostles to the believers. A Prophecy touching the condemnation of the ungodly and glorifying of the righteous. The pomp of God as King is described.

Venerable Bede : In the first part of the Psalm the Prophet, describing the powers of the Lord in His resurrection by various modes of proclamation, chides the worshippers of idols with merited rebuke. Secondly, he directs his words to the Lord, rejoicing that the Church believes in her Author,

and exhorting the faithful to rejoice in the Lord because He is wont to deliver them from the oppression of the ungodly.

(1) <i>Dominus regnāvit, ex-</i> <i>sultet terra : lætēntur insulæ</i> <i>multæ.</i>	<i>The Lord reigneth, let the</i> <i>earth be glad thereof : let the</i> <i>multitude of the isles rejoice.</i>
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This Psalm is one of those written after the return from Captivity ; and this explains many of the allusions. It begins with a grand proclamation of the restored sovereignty of God over Israel, displayed in the overthrow of the heathen power of Babylon and the revival of the one true worship in the Temple at Jerusalem. It declares that the Lord has shown Himself stronger than those kings of the earth who warred against Sion ; so that His people, though threatened with calamity by earthly tyrants, can, with sure confidence, put their trust in a King mightier than any other. Hence its deeper spiritual meaning, following St. Augustine, points to the Kingdom of Christ as manifested in His Nativity, and yet more in His Resurrection, when the yoke of the devil was broken ; and to be manifested once again in greater power at the second Advent.

Let the earth be glad thereof. Not Judea alone, but the whole face of the world and all the dwellers therein. Tertullian takes the *earth* to mean the bodies of the saints, to which such blessings come by reason of Christ's victory. Again, the phrase may stand for the whole Church, on earth, in purgatory, or in heaven.

The multitudes of the isles denote the various Churches throughout the world ; and they are called *isles* because, says St. Augustine, the waves of manifold temptation dash round them as waves ; yet, however buffeted by the roaring billows, they are not broken thereby, but rather by their resistance break the force thereof. So the Churches of God, which spring up everywhere in the midst of persecutions raging about them, remain unbroken and rise higher than the waves of a sea that has calmed down. St. Gregory takes the *earth*, the solid land, to denote the assembly of the teaching Church, and explains the *isles* as the multitude of the faithful, firm in the midst of a sea of troubles, parted from earth and its allurements.

(2) *Nubes, et caligo in circuitu Ejus : justitia et judicium correctio sedis Ejus.*

Clouds and darkness are round about Him : righteousness and judgment are the correction of His seat.

The first and obvious meaning of the earlier clause of the verse, says Bellarmine, is the invisible Majesty of God, Who dwelleth in light unapproachable, and Whose revelation of Himself to Israel was first in the Pillar of cloud, looking out of which He troubled the host of the Egyptians [1] ; and then when He gave the law from Sinai in the midst of darkness and thunderings [2]. On the mystical import of these *clouds and darkness*, themselves brighter and more resplendent than any natural light, the Areopagite [3] dwells, as denoting, amidst much else, the abstraction from earthly thoughts and sights, which is necessary for perfect contemplation of the Divine Glory, and that confession of our own ignorance and incapacity for comprehending the Infinite, which is a necessary preliminary for receiving any special revelation of God. The Carmelite and the Carthusian agree in reminding us of the second Coming of Christ in the *clouds* of heaven, like His departure at the Ascension ; and there is thus a second literal sense. Yet, again, as He withdraws from sinners and refuses to show them His face, He is said in respect of them to be hidden in *clouds and darkness*. There are, besides, several mystical interpretations, which are conveniently summed up thus : These *clouds and darkness* overshadowed the Church when the Law and the Prophets made Christ known to her. The *clouds* are also the Apostles filling the restored earth with their teaching ; the *darkness*, those wise men who, understanding deep mysteries, explained them to the Church. The *clouds* are also the Body of the Lord, wherein the Sun of Righteousness was hidden ; the *darkness*, His concealed Godhead, which appeared not to the eyes of flesh. Or, again, the *clouds* are the sacramental species veiling Him in the Blessed Sacrament ; and the *darkness* is the

[1] Exod. xiv. 24.

[2] *Ibid.* xix. 16.

[3] A mediæval writer, whose words were attributed to Denis, the Areopagite, whom St. Paul converted at Athens. See Acts xvii. 34.

secrecy of His hidden but all-glorious life therein. Or, finally, the *clouds* are scruples that beset the soul ; the *darkness*, that mystical dereliction in the midst whereof God is ever present.

Righteousness and judgment are the correction of His seat. The direct meaning is, when by faith we have penetrated the cloud of mystery shrouding the designs of God, we find absolute truth and justice the very rule of all His doings. Thus, after Moses had sprinkled the blood of the Covenant and had gone up into the clouds overshadowing Sinai along with "*Aaron, Nadah, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel : they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet, as it were, a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven when clear*" [1].

The correction of His seat. Bellarmine takes the words literally, as denoting the perfect equity of our Lord's judicial power in rewarding the just and punishing the wicked ; others, with Albert the Great, taking the souls of the faithful to be God's throne, explain that this throne is righted or corrected and set straight by attentive consideration of His dealing with sinners for warning and guidance.

(3) *Ignis ante Ipsum præcedet et inflammabit in circuitu inimicos Ejus.*

There shall go a fire before Him and burn up His enemies on every side.

This is, say most of the writers, that *fire* which precedes the Last Judgment, and that which Daniel foresaw in vision when the Ancient of Days did sit, and *a fiery stream issued forth before Him* [2] ; of which St. Peter also tells : *The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up* [3]. It will *burn up His enemies*, the wood, hay, and stubble, but will only purify His saints, the gold, silver, and precious stones reared on Him, their Foundation [4]. St. Augustine takes the fire to be the first Coming of Christ, and the flame of anger and persecution kindled everywhere by the preaching of the Gospel ; a flame which burnt up the persecutors themselves and not the Church against which they raged ; just as a torch applied to green

[1] Exod. xxiv. 9, 10.

[2] vii. 10.

[3] 2 Peter iii. 10.

[4] Cf. 1 Cor. iii. 12, 13.

wood is itself consumed while effecting its aim. There is, besides these, more exactly still, that *fire* which our Lord came to send upon earth [1], or the kindling blaze of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost. And of this the Prophet spoke, saying : *I will send a fire on Magog and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles : and they shall know that I am the Lord* [2]. This divine *fire*, says Cardinal Hugo, goes before the Lord, His coming to every faithful soul, as it kindles with longing for Him, and burns up all its sins therewith, as He heaps His coals of fire upon its head to soften and purify it. St. Bernard remarks : The *fire* of holy desire must needs go before His face to every soul into which He means to come, and a flame burning up all the mildew of sin, and making ready a place for the Lord. Then the soul knows that the Lord is at hand, when it feels itself kindled with that *fire*, and it saith with the prophet : *From above hath He sent fire into my bones, and hath chastised me* [3]; and again : *My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned, and at last I spake with my tongue* [4]. So, that, as Honorius says, by the forgiveness of sins His aforetime *enemies* are kindled with love and break forth in praise of His Name.

(4) *Illuxérunt fúlgura Ejus* *His lightnings gave shine*
orbi terræ : vidit, et com- *unto the world : the earth saw*
móta est terra. *it and was afraid.*

Here, again, in the literal sense, we may see a reference to the thunderings of Sinai, and the future fulfilment of St. Paul's words : *That the Lord Jesus will be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ* [5]. But the mystical writers refer it to the preaching of the Apostles, those sons of thunder, to the Gospel, to the awe that fell on the nations at the mighty words and power of the new teachers.

(5) *Montes, sicut cera, fluxérunt a facie Dómini : a facie Dómini omnis terra.* *The mountains melted away like wax at the presence of the Lord ; all the earth before His face.*

[1] Luke xii. 49.

[2] Ezek. xxxix. 6.

[3] Lam. i. 13.

[4] Ps. xxxviii. 4.

[5] 2 Thess. i. 8.

When God came down to deliver the Law *Mount Sinai was altogether covered with smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire ; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly* [1]. The Carmelite tells us that the mountains denote all those eminent in station, influence, power, wealth, or ability, who will either be converted and become flexible and ductile in the hands of the Lord, or else, in spite of their seeming greatness, will be destroyed, as by an earthquake before His face ; according to that saying : *The everlasting mountains are scattered, the perpetual hills did bow* [2]. St. Laurence Justinian points out another sense, and tells us we have here a type of penance, because the liquid form and level which wax assumes under heat, fitly denote the tears and humility of a heart softened by the grace of God.

(6) <i>Annuntiavérunt cæli</i>	<i>The heavens have declared</i>
<i>justítiam Ejus : et vidérunt</i>	<i>His righteousness, and all the</i>
<i>omnes pópuli glóriam Ejus.</i>	<i>people have seen His glory.</i>

The Angels' song at His Birth, the star of His Epiphany, the voice at His Baptism and Transfiguration, the eclipse at His Death, the earthquake at His Rising, the cloud of Glory at His Ascension, all these, says St. Augustine, *declare the righteousness of the Lord ; as Angels will again be the heralds of His second Coming when all the people, those nations of the earth who have already heard of His glory, as well as those who actually beheld Him working miracles in the flesh, will see Him in great power and majesty upon the Seat of Doom.*

(7) <i>Confundántur omnes qui</i>	<i>Confounded be all they that</i>
<i>adórant sculptília : et qui</i>	<i>worship carven images, and</i>
<i>gloriántur in simulácris suis.</i>	<i>that glory in their idols.</i>

Has it not come to pass ? Were they not confounded ? Are they not confounded every day ? Why are all they confounded that worship *carven images* ? Because all the people have seen His glory. Now all the people confess the glory of Christ, and they who worship stones are ashamed ; for those stones were dead ones, but we have found the Living Stone.

[1] Exod. xix. 18.

[2] Hab. iii. 6.

Nay, those stones were men who were never alive, so they cannot even be called dead, but our Stone is living, and hath ever been alive with the Father, and He died and lived again for us, and He lives now and death shall no more have dominion over Him [1]. The people know of this His glory, they abandon the temples for the churches. Thus St. Augustine. There are other *idols*, mere phantom objects of worship, besides graven images; for all assiduous court and homage paid to the wealthy and powerful and all preference of earthly things to the will of God is idolatry.

(8) *Adoráte Eum omnes
Angeli Ejus: audivit et lætata
est Sion.*

*Worship Him all ye His
Angels: Sion heard it and
rejoiced.*

(9) *Et exsultavérunt filiæ
Judeæ, propter judicia Tua,
Dómine.*

*And the daughters of Judea
were glad, because of Thy
judgments, O Lord.*

The high and mighty God, so real and living, is the object of the adoration of those blessed spirits, each one of whom, a very marvel of beauty and glory, would seem to us like a god, and worthy of our highest worship, did they not, like the Angel at whose feet St. John fell adoring, say: *See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them that keep the sayings of this book. Adore God* [2]. The Angels did worship Him, as they sang at His Birth, as they ministered to Him in the Wilderness after the Temptation, as in the Garden they bowed down in adoration, comforting the awful agony of the Son of God; as they attended Him in the pomp of His Ascension: and they worship Him now by guiding and watching over the souls of which He gives them charge.

Sion, the Church on earth, with those special favourites of the Lamb, the virgins who ever follow Him, *daughters of Judea*, rejoices in the eternal adoration which her Divine Head is ever the object of, and joins her *alleluia* to that eternal *alleluia* ever heard in the streets of the heavenly Jerusalem [3].

[1] Rom. vi. 9.

[2] Apoc. xxii. 9.

[3] Tobias xiii. 22.

(10) *Quóniam tu Dóminus altissimus super omnem terram : nimis exaltatus es super omnes deos.*

For Thou, O Lord, art most high above all the earth : Thou art exceedingly exalted above all gods.

The word *For*, Bellarmine says, is here emphatic. It is possible for us to rejoice with a sure gladness in Christ's judgments, because He is supreme and His sentences cannot be over-ruled and set aside by any higher authority. It is evermore a thought of rejoicing for the daughters of Judea, all tender and faithful souls, that it is their own Bridegroom, One of their own flesh and blood, Who is throned above the highest Angels ; and that He, now Lord and King of Heaven, has thrown it open to us.

(11) *Qui diligitis Dóminum, odite malum : custódit Dóminus ánimas sanctórum suórum, de manu peccatóris liberábit eos.*

O ye that love the Lord, hate ye the evil : The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints : He shall deliver them from the hand of the ungodly.

Here is a test of true love of God ; not only abstaining from evil, but *hating* it, shunning it for its repugnance to the holiness of God, and not only because of the danger of indulging in it. The *Evil* is sometimes taken to mean the Evil one, *the father of lies* [1]. St. John Chrysostom says : Let no man deceive himself ; God and the devil cannot be loved alike by one person, for either the devil is hated, or God is loved ; if the devil is loved, it must needs be that God is despised. Now, then, can we find out whether we do truly love God ? St. Bernard shall answer : You must ask your heart, your tongue, your work, whether you truly love God. Your heart, because it thinks often on what it loves, and if you do not often think of God, you will know you do not truly love Him ; and if you think more of the world than you do of God, you love the world more than God. Ask your tongue if you love God, for it gladly speaks of what the heart loves ; therefore he whose conversation is chiefly of the world is hereby proved to love it more than God. Ask your work

whether you love God ; for if fire be placed amidst straw it will burn, and if the fire of Divine love be in the heart it will show itself in action.

The Lord preserveth the souls of His saints. Here we may note two things—He makes no promise at all as to the bodies, nor yet as to the souls of any but *His saints*. The torments of the martyrs did not move their souls. He offers salvation to all who will accept it. He will never allow a soul that trusts in Him to be separated from His love. How freely He gives not only His help, but His very self, we hear when He comes to us in Holy Communion : “ May the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul into everlasting life.”

And He shall deliver them out of the hands of the ungodly. Not only by His grace and the protection of His holy angels here, but, says the Carmelite, by saving them from the accusations of the enemy in the Doom, and appointing them to be where no minister of evil can ever trouble them more.

(12) *Lux orta est justo, et* *There is sprung up a light*
rectis corde lætitia. *for the righteous, and gladness*
 for such as are true-hearted.

We may take this *light* first of the seeds of Divine grace, sown in the illumination of Baptism, and growing up by degrees to the perfect day of true holiness. Then of Christ Himself, sown with tears in His grave, rising again in glory and bringing gladness to His people. Or the Sending of the Holy Ghost, Who enlightens the mind with the brightness of divine grace which is vouchsafed to the *righteous and true-hearted*, that is, to all who have washed their sins in the Blood of Christ. St. Augustine says in his Confessions : There was a great dark cloud of vanity before mine eyes, so that I saw not the Sun of Righteousness and the Light of Truth ; I loved my darkness because I knew not Thy Light ; I was blind and loved my blindness and walked from darkness to darkness : but, Lord Thou art my God Who hast led me out of the darkness and the shadow of death and hath called me into this glorious Light. And, behold, I see.

Again, we may take this *light* as the voice of Conscience which is the heaven-given guide to each individual soul. And what is Conscience ? It is the *Light* of that great gift of

God, Reason, the *Light* of the Divine Countenance impressed upon our soul [1], teaching us practically what to do in every specific act. *Conscience*, after all, must be the guide by which we stand or fall in God's sight; it decides before the act whether it be sinful or not. After-reasonings or discussions cannot effect the sinfulness of any past act. That is decided, there and then, by the previous voice of Reason. This *Light* is clear and brilliant in the souls of the *righteous* and *true-hearted* who listen to the Voice of the Holy Ghost, trust Him as their Teacher and make use of His Seven Gifts to purify their understandings from the darkness of sin and to strengthen their wills. Thus the *Light* of Reason, or the Voice of Conscience, is developed, and *we know even as we are known* [2], and our heart is filled with the joyful gladness of the Sons of God who walk with Him in white [3].

(13) *Lætámíni justí in Dó-
míno : et confitémíni memóriæ
sanctificatiónis ejus.*

*Rejoice in the Lord, ye right-
eous : and give thanks for a
remembrance of His holiness.*

Holiness is not only an attribute of God, but is also a grace communicated by Him to His people, for which they are to give thanks. It is Justification; it is the Sacrament of Penance; it is Holy Baptism, say various commentators. The Carmelite takes the words of the Blessed Sacrament, wherein we bless and thank Him, by the Eucharistic worship, which is His Own memorial Rite wherein He is Priest and Victim, Host and Guest [4].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the Lord of the whole earth; Glory to the Son, Who preserveth the souls of His saints; Glory be to the Holy Ghost, Who is the joyful gladness of the true-hearted.

[1] Cf. Ps. iv. 6.

[2] Cor. xiii. 2.

[3] Cf. Apoc. iii. 4.

[4] St. Thomas thus writes in the *Adoro te* :—

“O most sweet memorial of His death and woe,
Living Bread which giveth life to man below,
Let my spirit ever eat of Thee and live,
And the blest fruition of Thy sweetness give.”

ANTIPHONS.

(1) (During the year) *Post partum Virgo inviolata permansisti, Dei Genitrix intercede pro nobis.* *After childbirth, O Virgin, thou didst remain inviolate, Mother of God intercede for us.*

(2) (During Advent) *Angelus Dómini nuntiávit Mariæ, et concépit de Spiritu sancto.* *The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary, and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.*

The first of these two Antiphons continues the description of the relations of our ever dear and blessed Lady to the Mystical Body. Through her own stainless Conception and her miraculous child-bearing she became the official intercessor between the Members and the Head. Jesus came to us through her. She has given Him to the world. Without her free consent the Incarnation would never have taken place; for God forces no one. He ever respects the free will He has given, that free will by which we are made images of our Maker. Having thus given us Jesus, the great Gift of God, is it wonderful that we should also get His gifts through her? Or that having given us the greater she should also give us the lesser? This Antiphon, then, teaches us her office of Intercessor between us and Jesus, Who is Himself the *one Mediator of God and Man* [1]. She does her office now, as she did at Cana of Galilee, when she told Him the wants of the guests and then told the people, *Whatsoever He shall say to you that do ye* [2].

This Antiphon when used during Christmas-tide, and recalls the spotless Motherhood of Mary, ever a Virgin. Before, in, and after child-bearing she remained inviolate, and was, according to the flesh, the Mother of none save the Son of God.

The second of these Antiphons, made up of a familiar Versicle and Response, is used during Advent-tide, and emphasises the divine Maternity from which flow all the offices of Mary to the members of Jesus Christ. It finds its echo in the Psalm : *The Lord hath made known His salvation ;*

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[2] John ii. 3-5.

and all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God, that is, Jesus, the Son of Mary.

PSALM XCVII.

Title.—A Psalm of David.

Argument.

Tomasi : That God, by the Coming of His Son, hath declared His salvation unto all. The voice of the Apostles rejoicing at the Resurrection of Christ. The voice of the Church to the Lord and to the Apostles. Concerning the first and second Coming of Christ.

Venerable Bede : The Psalm refers to our Lord, concerning Whose Coming the Psalmist is about to speak. In the first part the Psalmist recommends the Christian people to be glad with the rejoicing of a new song, since the wondrous Coming of Christ is granted. In the second part he declares more fully in various ways that we should rejoice because the Judge desired by the righteous is to come at last.

(1) *Cantate Dómino cánticum novum : quia mirabilia fecit.*

sing unto the Lord a new song : for He hath done marvellous things.

(2) *Salvavit Sibi dextera Ejus : et bráchium sanctum Ejus.*

With His right hand and with His holy arm hath He saved Himself.

The *song* must be *new*, because of the unwonted nature of the marvellous things God hath wrought. When of old, with a mighty hand and an arm stretched out, He brought His people out of Egypt, He saved but one small nation ; He overthrew in the Red Sea only a human enemy. But now His salvation extends to all nations of the earth ; the enemy He has routed is the Prince of the powers of the air : it is wickedness in the high places.

He hath done marvellous things, says Bellarmine, in the Incarnation, Birth, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and in the Sending of the Holy Ghost ; not to speak of the miracles He wrought in person during His sojourn on earth, or by the hand of His servants since. But the words most especially refer to the Resurrection, the greatest of all His earthly miracles ; and

in that He wrought this marvel alone : *I have power to lay My life down and I have power to take it up again* [1], with no one to aid in the agony of His Passion, with no hand to pluck Him back from the grave. He said in prophecy of old : *The year of My redeemed is come, and I looked and there was none to help, and I wondered that there was none to uphold ; therefore Mine own arm hath brought salvation unto Me and My fury it upheld Me* [2]. We may also, following Lorin, take, without any material change in the meaning, the words as spoken by the Father, declaring that He wrought the salvation of mankind by one instrument alone—His own Right Hand, the only-begotten Son, by Whose second Coming, of which this Psalm speaks, as well as His first, the triumph will be completed.

(3) *Notum fecit Dóminus
Salutare Suum : in conspéctu
gentium revelávit justítiam
Suam.*

*The Lord hath made known
His salvation, and hath re-
vealed His righteousness in
the sight of the heathen.*

It is the manifestation of the only-begotten Son, the Saviour of Mankind, the Light to enlighten the Gentiles of whom Simeon chanted his dying song while doubtless thinking of this Psalm. And observe, it is not said that God showed, but that He *made known His salvation*. For He had shown it in mystery of old to the Patriarchs. Adam knew Him as the Redeemer to come ; and so did Abel, who offered Him a lamb ; and Seth, who called on His Name ; and Noe, who was His type, saving mankind in the Ark ; and Abraham, who offered up his own son. But the world had forgotten Him, and therefore the Father made Him *known*. So the Carmelite. And the Carthusian points out that God did this with care that the Birth should not pass unnoticed ; for He made it known to shepherds by the angels, to the wise men by the star, to Zacharias by the angel Gabriel, to Simeon and Anna by the Holy Ghost. But to the Gentiles, who had no previous knowledge to be recalled, He *revealed His righteousness in their sight*. So we may notice that the Apostles never address their Gentile congregations in parables, as our Lord did the Jews. They make direct proclamation of the Gospel.

[1] John x. 18.

[2] Isaias lxi. 4-5.

His salvation, His righteousness. These terms mean *Jesus the Holy One, the Just One* [1]. He is known to the faithful *in the breaking of bread* [2]; and to those outside He is declared by the Church, whose Unity He chose as the mark that might convince men of His Divine Mission [3].

(4) <i>Recordatus est misericordiae suae, et veritatis suae dómui Israel.</i>	<i>He hath remembered His mercy and His truth towards the house of Israel.</i>
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The word *remembered* is here employed, as in the *Benedictus* and *Magnificat*, not in any way denoting that God could possibly forget, but to remind us of the length of time which passed before the promised Deliverer appeared, a delay which would, in any human analogy, be due to oblivion. But God is eternal: and a *thousand years are as a day in His sight* [4.] It is said towards the *house of Israel* because the promises of mercy were made originally to the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, so that God's truth was concerned in fulfilling this pledge. Accordingly the true manifestation of the Saviour, the first preaching of the Gospel, was among the people and in the land of Israel.

(5) <i>Viderunt omnes términi terræ salutâre Dei nostri.</i>	<i>All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.</i>
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This latter verse, read in the light of the former, shows the uncovenanted mercies whereby His love overflows the contract He makes with His creatures. We are bound by His Covenant, but He can work without restrictions. Nothing can bind Him save Himself; and He, the Apostle tells us, is charity [5].

All the ends of the earth. To all those Gentiles who had not claim on His truth: and yet to them, to us, He has shown Jesus His salvation. And precisely so runs the prophecy of Isaías: *It is a light thing that Thou shouldst be My servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the desolations of*

[1] Acts iii. 14.

[2] Luke xxiv. 35.

[3] John xvii. 21.

[4] Ps. lxxxix. 4.

[5] 1 John iv. 8.

Israel : I will also give Thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth [1].

(6) <i>ſubilate Deo omnis terra : cantate, et exsultate, et psallite.</i>	<i>Show yourselves joyful unto the Lord all ye lands : sing, rejoice, and give thanks.</i>
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Commentators tell us that by the use of these general words various grades of spiritual exultation are denoted, to each of which *all lands*, the whole extent of the Church, are invited.

Show yourselves joyful is the first inarticulate expression of the soul's delight, striving for utterance ; but not yet able to collect itself, nor perfectly to understand the nature of its gladness. *Sing* tells us that words of suitable devotion have been found at last. *Rejoice* tells us of the fervent happiness with which the saints pour forth their prayers to God. And *give thanks* (upon the harp) implies the active praise of good works performed for His sake.

(7) <i>Psalite Domino in cithara, in cithara et voce psalmi : in tubis ductilibus, et voce tubæ corneæ.</i>	<i>Praise the Lord upon the harp, upon the harp and with the voice of a psalm : with trumpets and with the sound of the shawm.</i>
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We have now five methods of rejoicing put before us, the five words of which St. Paul speaks : *Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue* [2]. These five words answer, as Perez remarks, to the five titles given to our Lord in this Psalm, viz., right hand, holy arm, salvation, righteousness, and truth. As regards the mystical signification of the various instruments named here, we are reminded, first, that by the *harp* we are taught that all our faculties, all parts of our conduct, should be vocal with sweet melody to God. For a harp is imperfect if even one string be lacking or not in tune with the others. What profits it thee, then, if thou be chaste, liberal in almsgiving, and yet envious ? What advantage is it if thou have six strings whole and one broken ? The *harp*

[1] xlix. 6.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

(a symbol of mortification, with its tense strings and empty hollow) is twice named, to teach us that bodily austerity and the practice of holiness need to be repeated and not left off after the beginning ; that we are to praise with body and soul in prosperity and adversity, in this life and the next : and it is coupled with the *psalm of thanksgiving* in the second place, because contemplation and prayer, in addition to active virtues, are essential to spiritual life and joy. Some, however, think that the ten-stringed harp is meant here, implying the keeping of the ten commandments.

With trumpets and shawms, or, literally, "on drawn-out trumpets and with the sound of the trumpet of horn." The first are aptly assigned to the heralding of the Gospel, while the humbler "trumpet of horn" to the pastoral teaching of Christian shepherds. Yet another view, that of Albert the Great, sees in the metal trumpets the martyrs of Christ ; and in the cornet (horn), made of that which springs from the flesh, yet is not of it, the confessors who have kept their carnal affections in check by asceticism, and by lifting themselves up in the practice of prayer towards God.

(8) *Fubilâte in conspectu regis Dómini : moveátur mare, et plenitúdo Ejus : orbis terrárum, et qui hábitant in eo.*

O show yourselves joyful before the Lord the King : Let the sea be moved and the fulness thereof : the round world and they that dwell therein.

(9) *Flúmina plaudent manu, simul montes exsultábunt a conspéctu Dómini : quóniam venit judicáre terram.*

Let the floods clap their hands and let the hills be joyful together before the Lord : for He comes to judge the earth.

The Carmelite says, We show ourselves joyful before the Lord when we so constantly have Him in our thoughts, words, and deeds ; when we are conscious of acting with continual reference to Him and not to the world or to ourselves ; and when ours is a glad and filial service, not the servile letter of slaves. The notion of this clause, which really belongs to the former verse, is that of the processional march with music and singing to greet the King as He returns from victory and coronation. A monarch, in such cases, bestows largesse

upon his subjects. So our special time for rejoicing is when our King comes to judgment and bestows rewards on His faithful people. The Psalmist goes on to call inanimate creation, which, in St. Paul's words, *groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now* [1], to swell the hymn of triumph raised by all that dwell in the round world. But as Corder, giving us various opinions of Oriental commentators, says, There are spiritual meanings underlying the various terms used. The *sea*, as one will have it, denotes the Law, once bitter, now made sweet by the word of the Cross ; or else the restless, tossing, bitter, and sorrowful life of the world and all that are mixed up with it ; also those who shed the salt tears of penitence.

The *round world*, those within the circle of the Church, firm and fruitful.

The *floods*, drinking in the waters of wisdom from their source, and irrigating the dry land, denote all holy preachers of the word. The *hills* are those in high position, especially in the offices of the Church.

Let the sea be moved. St. Augustine observes that it is exactly when the storms of persecution are raging that saints are most zealous and most happy, clapping their hands in very joy in honour of their King.

The *floods* mean the faithful regenerated in the sweet waters of Baptism, and remind us that the rivers flow down from the *hills*, and bid us see herein the spiritual might and progress of the disciples in the Faith.

For He comes to judge the earth. With Bellarmine, we may take this either of our Lord's first or second Coming. If of the first, then the ground of rejoicing is because *He comes* to rule the earth with a Law, perfectly just ; and to do so, not as of old in the unseen Majesty of the Godhead, but in bodily and visible form, as a Man dwelling with men. If of the second Coming, then the theme of rejoicing is the final victory over sin and the making *all things new* [2], when we are delivered at last from the bondage of corruption unto the glorious liberty of the children of God [3].

[1] Rom. viii. 22.

[2] Apoc. xxi. 5.

[3] Cf. Rom. viii. 21.

(10) <i>Judicabit orbem terrarum in justitia, et pópulos in æquitáte.</i>	<i>With righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity.</i>
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This Psalm ends precisely as does the first Psalm in this Nocturn, with the exception of the last word *equity* instead of *truth*. It is a word of hope and of fear alike. Of hope, because the feeble and the oppressed will find an advocate in their Judge ; for it is written : *With righteousness shall He judge the poor and argue with equity for the meek of the earth* [1]. Of fear, for, *If Thou, Lord, will mark iniquities, Lord, who shall abide it ?* [2]. But as He hath not yet come for the second time, why should men tremble ? Let them amend and rejoice. It is in thine own power how thou shalt look for the Coming of Christ. He delays that Coming that He may not have to condemn thee. Behold He cometh not yet. He is in heaven and thou on earth. He delays His Coming, delay not thou thy counsel. His Coming is hard to the obdurate, but gentle to the loving. Look, then, at once what thou art ; if obdurate, thou mayest soften ; if gentle, rejoice that He is coming. For thou art a Christian ? Yes, sayest thou. I believe thou prayest and sayest, *Thy kingdom come*. Thou desirest Him to come of Whose Coming thou art afraid. Repent lest thy prayer be against thyself. Thus St. Augustine.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the Lord and King ; Glory to the Son, His Right Hand, Who shall judge the world with righteousness ; Glory to the Holy Ghost, Who declared the salvation of God.

VERSICLE AND RESPONSE.

<i>V. Diffúsa est grátia in lábiis tuis.</i>	<i>Grace is poured forth on thy lips.</i>
<i>R. Proptérea benedixit te Deus in ætérnum.</i>	<i>Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.</i>

These, taken from the first Psalm in the second Nocturn, fittingly conclude a Nocturn which has been mainly con-

[1] Is. xi. 4.

[2] Ps. cxxix. 3.

cerned with the office of our ever dear and blessed Lady towards the Mystical Body. They sum up everything. From the *grace poured forth* on her lips at the *Fiat mihi* comes all her blessedness in which we share so abundantly. It is well to fix this point into our minds : Mary is what she is to us, because she is the Mother of God. So our love for her *will abound more and more* [1] in knowledge and understanding.

PATER NOSTER.

Said in silence.

℣. *Et ne nos inducas in* *And lead us not into*
tentationem. *temptation.*

℞. *Sed libera nos a malo.* *But deliver us from evil.*

The pious author of the *Myroure* thus comments on the *Pater Noster* :—

“*Our Father.* Think now that as a child giveth trust fully to his father in what distress soever he be in, so ye, in whatever distress or trouble or temptation or sin that you be in, meekly and trustingly lift up your heart to God your Father, and tell Him what aileth you, and say to Him, *our Father*. You say not *my Father*, but *our Father*; whereby we are taught to have great charity and love each to another, and to all our fellow-Christians, inasmuch as we are all children of one Father, to Whom we all say *our Father*.

“*Who art in heaven.* Therefore lift up your hearts from earthly and vain things and offer them to Him that is not only in heaven above in bliss, but also in the souls of His servants by grace, which are called heavens. And in each place He is, by His being, and by His presence, and by His power. Think, then, wherever you be, that God, your Father, is present before you, with you, and all about you, and by grace in every one's heart that is out of deadly sin; and in this beholding say to Him with great love and joy and reverence, *Our Father, Who art in heaven*.

“*Thy Name be hallowed*, that is, (may) the worship and love of Thy holy Name be so confirmed and stabled in our minds, that whatever we think, or say, or do, we must ever-

more intend the holiness and praising of Thy Holy Name and not the vanity of our own name. And that our life may be so holy that thy Name be hallowed, and worshipped thereby in us. And further, that it may be thus :—

“Thy kingdom come, that is, may the Lordship of all sin be so cast out of us, and mayest Thou so reign in us by the grace and plenty of all virtues, that we (may) be ready to desire Thy Coming in the fulness of Thy Kingdom at the Day of Doom, or at the end of our life. And also that Thy Kingdom may so come to them that are in Purgatory that they may be delivered from all pain and come to rest in the joy of Thy Kingdom. And so, in this petition, you ask that God should reign in you and in your fellow-Christians by grace. And that both you and all living and dead should come to the Kingdom of bliss.

“Thy Will be done on earth as it is in heaven, that is, as Thy saints that are in heaven are conformed in all things to Thy Will, so give us will and strength to desire and to fulfil Thy Will in all things, be it never so contrary to our vain wills. So that if Thou wilt have us in sickness, or in tribulation, in weal or woe, in heaven, in earth, or in hell, Thy Fatherly Will be done in us. Think not that our Father will have any of His children in hell. But our obedience to our Father ought to be fervent and simple, that we take no heed of heaven, nor of hell, but only of the fulfilment of our Father’s will.

“Give us this day our daily bread, that is, the sustenance of our bodily life which Thou sendest us, grant us to take it soberly, without surfeit, and patiently, without grudging, and give us sufficiently thereof to our need. And the bread of Thy Word give us this day, by feeling devotion in Thy holy service and in prayer, and in all reading and hearing of Thy Word. Give us, Father, the bread of Thy grace, with which we be comforted and strengthened to withstand evil and to do good. And give us such faith and charity and devotion in our souls that thereby we may receive every day the Bread of Thy Holy Sacrament of the Altar, that is, Lord Jesus, Thyself, in the unity of Thy Church, though we receive it not every day with our bodily mouths.

“And forgive our trespasses, as we forgive our trespassers. This petition seems heavy to them that behold other men’s sins and forget their own. But, and we see clearly, how great and many our sins are against God, and how little in regard thereof any offence is that is done against us, we should think it a petition of unspeakable comfort that by forgiveness of so little and few we may get forgiveness of so many and so great. I have sinned against God and deserved pain; another hath sinned against me and deserved punishing. If I forgive the offence and not the pain, my Father, God, will do the same to me; if I forgive pain and all, so shall God, my Father, forgive me. Glad, therefore, ought we to be when any trespass is done against us in word or deed, and more glad to forgive it, and with heart and word and look and deed; and to love them and to do (good) for them. For by them we have occasion to get from God, our Father, the large and greatly desired pardon and forgiveness of all our sins and of all the pains that we have deserved therefore. The great comfort that this petition giveth to a sinful soul cannot lightly be told, for He is Truth that biddeth us pray thus, and it may not be in vain; but as we forgive we shall be forgiven . . . And if we be in will to forgive, and feel contrary stirrings in ourselves, yet let us nevertheless say this same petition trustingly to our Father, thinking thus: Grant us, good Father, verily to forgive our trespassers as we desired to be forgiven of Thee.

“And lead us not into temptation, that is, suffer us not for our unkindness and demerits to fall into sin by any temptation. This is a petition heartily to be asked. For none make progress in virtue without temptation; nor can anyone withstand temptation, be he never so perfect, without the special help and grace of God. And therefore let us pray our Father with fear and by this petition, not to keep us from temptation, but to keep us so that fall we not by any temptation.

“But deliver us from evil. We can neither, nor may not of ourselves, do anything but sin, nor can we, or may we, deserve anything but pain. And therefore meekly and with dread, knowing our own feebleness, we pray our Father to deliver us from evil of all sin and of all peril and of all pain, temporal and everlasting.

"*Amen*. This word *Amen*, is a word of Hebrew; and sometimes it is a word of affirming, and is as much as to say, 'Truly,' or 'Faithfully.' And sometimes it is a word of desiring, and is as much as to say, 'So be it,' or 'Be it done.' And so it is set here for to show a great desire that we ought to have all that is asked before in this Prayer be fulfilled. For in these seven petitions is asked all that is needed to us for body and soul in this life and after.

"Thus may you have your mind on this prayer, when you say it, if you will study and labour to understand it, and keep it in your mind. Not that you must have mind in all the words that I have written, but on the meaning. For the understanding of man, namely, when it is lightened by grace, may conceive more in a little while than the tongue may speak in a longer time, and therefore, while you say the words of your *Pater Noster* I hope your understanding will the better be fed unto the inward meaning, as I have now written. At least, with some thereof, if you will do your duty, and for as much as our Saviour made this prayer for our health, it is good that you intend always to say it according to the intention that He made it for, and to ask thereby all things that He intended should be asked thereby when He made it" [1].

THE ABSOLUTION.

*Precibus et méritis beátæ
Mariæ semper virginis, et
ómnium Sanctórum perducát
nos Dóminus ad regna cæló-
rum. R. Amen.*

*By the prayers and the merits
of Blessed Mary ever virgin,
and of all the saints, may the
Lord bring us to the heavenly
realms. Amen.*

"The Absolution is not only a loosening from the faults we have committed while reciting the Office, but it is also a special prayer to dispose our soul to profit by the words of the Sacred Scripture which are about to be read to us. For the psalmody being over, we now rest and let the Holy Ghost speak to our hearts; for as the Preacher saith: *There is a time to keep silence and a time to speak.*" [2]

V. Fube domine benedicere.

Lord, command her to bless.

[1] *Myroure*, p. 73-77.

[2] *Myroure*, p. 101; Eccles. iii. 7.

BLESSING.

*Nos cum Prole pia, benedicat
Virgo Maria.*

*May the Virgin Mary,
together with her kind Son,
bless us.*

"Then cometh the reader and asketh leave of God Almighty and the help of your prayers that she may read to our Lord's worship and sayeth, *ſube domine benedicere*—Lord, bid me say well ; as if she said : Lord give me leave and bid me say or read, for else I dare not presume to open my mouth to these holy words ; and give me strength and grace to read and say them, and so well that Thou mayest be pleased and the hearers edified and my soul unhurt. And though these words be thus said principally to God, yet they are also said to her that giveth the blessing and who therein occupieth God's stead, so that she should bless His name, and give her leave to read. For by blessing is understood giving of leave ; therefore she saith, *ſube domine benedicere*, that is, 'Lord bid her bless.' . . . Then she that is asked to bless, knowing well that the blessing or leave-giving belongeth principally to God, prayeth our Lady for help and for succour, both to the reader and to the hearers. . . . In all this you may see how diligently you ought to be in reading and hearing of our lessons, while there is ordained so great instance before to make you ready thereto. Then followeth the lesson, that is, as much as to say a 'reading' " [1].

THE FIRST LESSON.

Ecclesiasticus xxiv. 11.

*In omnibus requiem quæ-
ſivi, et in hereditate Dómini
morabor. Tunc præcepit, et
dixit mihi Créator omnium :
et Qui creávit me, requiævit in
tabernáculo meo, et dixit mihi :
In Jacob inhabita et in Israel
hereditare, et in electis meis
mitte radices.*

*In all things I sought rest,
and I shall abide in the heri-
tage of the Lord. Then the
Maker of all things commanded
and said to me, and He that
made me rested in my taber-
nacle : and He said to me,
Let thy dwelling be in Jacob
and in Israel thine inheri-
tance, and take thou root
among Mine elect.*

V. *Tu autem Dómine miserere nobis.*

But do Thou, O Lord, have mercy.

R. *Deo grátias.*

Thanks to God.

That Wisdom of Whom it is said : *I came forth from the mouth of the Most High and I have made in heaven a light that faileth not, My dwelling is on high, and My throne a pillar of cloud* [1], is none other than the Second Person of the adorable Trinity. He is fittingly called the Wisdom of the Father, for He proceeds from Him by way of understanding. He is the Eternal Word, the perfect Image of the Father, the same Lord and God as the other two Divine Persons. Now, Creation is the work of Omnipotence, of Wisdom, and of Love. It is the work of the Blessed Three. But Sacred Scripture seems to point out that in a particular sense it is to be attributed to the Son Who was to be the *first-born of every creature* [2]. *Thou hast made all things in wisdom*, says the Psalmist [3]. And so the work of the new Creation is also to be particularly attributed to the Son, to Him Whose dearest Name is that of Jesus the Saviour, and Who hath sent us the Holy Ghost, the uncreated Love of Father and of Son. The work of restoration was founded on the sublimest Wisdom. Man had fallen from his primæval righteousness and had to retrace his steps. This of himself he could not do, having lost the gift of sanctifying grace. But although God comes to his assistance, Man has to do his part and acts upon his own responsibility. The work, then, of regaining heaven is one not so much of repression, or of uprooting our nature, as of self-education. The nature which God gave, and which He Himself assumed, is not in itself bad. Original sin robbed it of that supernatural life in which our first parents were constituted ; it gave it a distinct tendency towards evil. The Body overweighted the Soul, and right Reason lost its control over Man. So, in the Wisdom of God, the work of reparation consists in restoring the lost balance, setting Reason, or Conscience, back again upon its lost throne ; thus enabling us to act in wisdom instead of in thralldom to our lower appetites. This,

[1] Eccles. xxiv. 5.

[2] Col. i. 15.

[3] Ps. ciii. 24.

then, was the wise work of the Repairer of the Fall. By this restoration of the God-like gift of Reason to its supremacy, and enriching it by the higher light of Faith, Man was set on the road to heaven, painful and slow though his progress might be. It was to be a lasting work. The first important point, therefore, was to teach man Who his Maker is ; and what are his relations to that Maker. In the dealings of God with Israel we see the manner in which Divine Wisdom worked. One people chosen out from all the children of men ; one small tract of country taken as the seat of the Divine operations. To this people was the Covenant made : *I will be your God and you shall be My people* [1]. This Covenant with Israel, of course, did not tie God's hands, nor did it restrain His uncovenanted mercies towards those beyond the borders of the Twelve Tribes. But the work of education was, at first, to go on only within these limits. The Israelites were gradually taught to look forward with greater longing and intensity to Him Who was to come. Patriarchs sighed for Him ; Seers foretold Him. The place and the time when He was to come were predicted clearly. Each step was weighed, each wisely chosen. *In all things Wisdom sought rest, that rest which only comes when perfect love exists between God and the Creature, when the work of education is done, and Man is fit for heaven.* Israel was the chosen spot. It was the heritage of the Lord, and there Wisdom chose to abide. But as the Incarnation was the fulfilment of the past, so it was the promise of the future. Israel had to enlarge her tents and widen her borders [2]. The true Israel, of which the Hebrews were only a tribe, is God's Church, where Wisdom ever abides in the inheritance of the Lord : *I am with you all days, even to the end of world* [3]. Here, in the Church, the work of educating the soul for heaven proceeds apace, and would be the sooner accomplished did we not put so many obstacles in the way. But Wisdom knows how to achieve its ends. It is patient and can wait. It can turn the very obstacles into new stepping-stones to heaven. But meanwhile, from the very dawn of the Incarnation, there was one, a human

[1] Jer. xxx. 22.

[2] Cf. Isaias liv. 2.

[3] Matt. xxviii. 20.

creature, pure and holy, whose soul was a fitting resting-place for Divine Wisdom, and who was the type of what Humanity, aided by God's grace, could be. And this one was the stainless Virgin Mary, chosen to be God's Mother. She became the living "Seat of Wisdom," and showed forth, to the greatest extent possible to a mere creature, the Wisdom of God. Hence, Holy Church does not hesitate, by analogy, to apply to our ever dear and blessed Lady the description of the Eternal Wisdom given in these lessons. Her wisdom was but a ray of that which was God's; and, moreover, it was not her own but the gift of her Maker.

Now, then, to apply the Lesson to our ever dear and blessed Lady. This lesson has a great affinity to the spirit which pervades the Psalms of the first Nocturn. It treats of the predestination of Mary.

In all things I sought for rest. This is the longing of the human heart—rest; and rest can only be found in God. It was by her *Ecce ancilla Dómini* that Mary found her rest, submitting her will once for all to that of Her Maker: *This is my rest, for I have chosen it* [1]. Therefore does she abide for ever in the inheritance of the Lord. By her complete submission to God's Will it is seen that, in her case, Reason had fully resumed its throne and ruled her. She was the Hand-maiden; He was the Lord. When she had proved her submission, the Creator of all things rested in her sacred womb; and on account of her incomparable dignity of Mother of God, which was the recompense for her submission, she has had appointed to her in the Church a place commensurate with her dignity.

Jacob, whose other name was *Israel*, which means "seeing God," is typical of the Church. Nor must it be forgotten that Jacob means "supplanter," and refers to the true Supplanter, Jesus, Who has supplanted the first Adam and made Himself the true Head of our Race. And in her turn Mary supplants Eve, and is the true "Mother of all the Living." *Jacob* may also be taken to represent the active life, and *Israel*, "seeing God," the contemplative life. The example of Mary, the type

of union with God, must find a place in the souls devoted to the active life if they would escape the dangers they are exposed to. But *Israel* is her chosen heritage, her very own ; for those souls who follow the Lamb into the heights of simple contemplation are, in a special way, her children ; for their submission to God is more complete than the others, their interior life more resembles her's *who ever kept these words in her heart* [1], and *who heard the Will of God and did it* [2]. It is in these souls that her example strikes root deeply, and produces in them flowers here, and fruit hereafter.

"When the lesson is ended the reader addresseth her heart and voice to God and saith, *Tu autem*, that is, But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us, as if she said : I have offended in my reading by some vanity of myself, or by irreverence to Thy Holy Word, or by some negligence, and the hearers perhaps also by some distraction of their minds from this holy lesson ; but Thou, Lord, have mercy upon us. Then the hearers answer, not to her asking mercy, but for the holy doctrine that they have heard in the lesson, and say : We give thanks to God. The reader asketh mercy rather than returns thanks ; for he that teacheth or doeth anything, though it be never so good, and done with ever so good an intention, yet he ought not at once to give God thanks, as though he had done it well, like as did that proud Pharisee, as the Gospel telleth [3] ; but he ought to humble himself and ask for mercy, fearing lest he have offended in anything and not done well, as that holy and rightful and patient man Job did. For notwithstanding that his deeds were holy and good, yet he said : *I dread all my works* [4]. For he that loveth cleanness of conscience dreadeth always lest anything should defile it. But the hearers thank God and say *Deo grátias*. For he that is taught or receiveth any benefit of God ought to give thanks therefore. Nevertheless, the reader asketh mercy for the hearers as well as for herself, and the hearers give thanks both for the readers and for themselves ; for all good deeds done in Holy Church are common to all them that are in charity" [5].

[1] Luke ii. 19.

[4] ix. 28.

[2] xi. 28.

[5] *Myroure*, pp. 106-7.

[3] Luke xviii. 11.

RESPONSORY.

*Sancta et immaculata virginitas ! quibus te laudibus effera-
m, nescio : * Quia Quem
caeli capere non poterant, tuo
gremio contulisti.*

*Maidenhood holy and with-
out spot ! I know not with what
praises I may extol thee ; *
For Him Whom the heavens
might not hold thou didst bear
in thy womb.*

*¶. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris
tui. * Quia Quem, &c.*

*Blessed art thou among
women, and blessed is the Fruit
of thy womb. * For Him, &c.*

This Responsory, sung immediately after the Lesson, is a loving commentary on the thoughts inspired by the words of Holy Writ, that God should dwell in a temple made with hands. The soul is lost in admiration at the wonderful designs of Eternal Wisdom and cannot find words enough to praise so great a work, but those which the Holy Ghost Himself put upon the lips of the Angel and holy Elizabeth : *Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.*

BLESSING.

Ipsa Virgo virginum intercedat pro nobis ad Dominum.

*May the Virgin of Virgins
herself intercede for us to the
Lord.*

In this second Blessing we catch up the idea which seems to predominate in the second Nocturn, viz., that of the beauty of the soul of Mary and of the treasures of grace with which Divine Wisdom enriched her in preparation for the dignity of being His Mother. And the *Virgo virginum* of the blessing strikes at once the note of her spotless purity and sanctity : *The white raiment in which she walks with Jesus amid the lilies among which the Spouse feedeth [1]. Thou art all fair [2].*

[1] Cf. Apoc. iii. 4 ; Cant. iv. 7.

[2] *Ibid.* ii. 16.

SECOND LESSON.

Et sic in Sion firmáta sum, et in civitatē sanctificáta similiter requiēvi, et in Jērusalem potestas mea. Et radicávi in pópulo honorificáto, et in parte Dei mei heréditas illius, et in plenitúdine sanctórum detentio mea.

Tu autem, &c.

And so was I established in Sion, and in the Holy City likewise I rested ; and in Jērusalem was my power ; and I took root in an honourable people, even in the portion of my God, His heritage, and in the fulness of the saints was my tarrying.

The application of this lesson to our ever dear and blessed Lady is clear.

Sion is the Church on earth ; and in it we are drawn after her by the sweet smell of her virtues. How fixed and firm is devotion to Mary in Christ's Church is seen from the position she holds in the Divine Economy, viz., that of the Neck which unites the Hèad to the Body, the appointed channel of all communications between them.

The Holy City we may take for that dim land of Purgatory, truly a *Holy City* full of God's own children, where the Church Suffering is. There does Mary's love and power of intercession rest in a peculiar way, for the holy souls are her special children, the sinners for whom she has prayed at the hour of their death, the souls who are going through the last courses of that education which Divine Wisdom has planned for making in them *the new man who, according to God, is created in justice and holiness of Truth* [1].

Jērusalem, we must take for the *Urbs beata*, "the blest vision of peace," where the Church Triumphant reigns. There is fully displayed Mary's power with her Son, for there she reigns in all her beauty and holiness, undisputed Queen. The Angels with jubilee hail her as such : the Patriarch and Prophets acknowledge her ; the Apostles acclaim their Master's Mother as their Queen ; Martyrs recognise in her Sorrows a martyrdom far above theirs. Confessors throng round her, as courtiers their sovereign ; and Virgins tell forth

[1] Eph. iv. 24.

the praise of her who has taught them to minister before the Lord and to love Him above all earthly loves.

Amidst the honourable people of God's elect she has taken root, and rejoices in the heritage God has appointed her.

In the fulness of the saints was her *tarrying*; for she sums up all their virtues. She has, says her servant, St. Bernard, the faith of the Patriarch, the spirit of the Prophets, the fear of the Apostles, the gratitude of the Martyrs, the continence of the Confessors, the purity of Virgins, the gratefulness of Spouses, and the splendour of the Angels.

RESPONSORY.

*Béata es Virgo María quæ
Dóminum portásti Creatórem
mundi.* Genuísti qui te fecit,
et in ætérnum pérmanes virgo.*

*Ave Mária, grátia plena:
Dóminus tecum.* Genuísti.*

*Blest art thou, Maiden Mary,
who hast borne the Lord, the
Maker of the world.* Thou
hast begotten Him Who made
thee and remainest for ever a
maiden.*

*Hail, Mary, full of Grace,
the Lord is with thee.* Thou
hast, &c.*

The incomparable beauty and dignity of our Lady is the theme of this Responsory. As one likes to linger over some beautiful sound, or perfume, to let it penetrate our being and leave behind a sweet impression, so the thought of Mary's greatness, her fulness of grace, is very sweet to linger over. Thoughts come welling up from our hearts as we ponder over her: Faith in the Incarnation; Awe at God's dealing with men; Adoration at the marvellous Wisdom displayed; and Wonder and Thanksgiving for the great things He hath done to her. These are all expressed in the Responsory and should find an echo in our heart.

BLESSING.

*Per Virginem Matrem con-
cédat nobis Dóminus salútem
et pácem.*

*Through the Maiden Mother
may the Lord grant us health
and peace.*

This Blessing and the subsequent Lesson refer us to the Third Nocturn, wherein is set before us Mary's office to the

Church at large. Its meaning, in brief, is, may we through her intercession obtain from God grace, the true health of our souls, and peace, that is, friendship with God.

THIRD LESSON.

Quasi cedrus exaltata sum in Libano, et quasi cypréssus in monte Sion : quasi palma exaltata sum in Cades, et quasi plantatio rosæ in Jéricho. Quasi oliva speciosa in campis, et quasi platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam in plateis. Sicut cinnamónum, et bálsamum aromatizans odorem dedi : quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris.

Like the cedar in Libanus was I exalted, and as a cypress tree upon Mount Sion ; like the palm tree in Cades was I exalted, and as a rose garden in Jericho. As a fair olive tree in the fields, and as a plane tree beside the water in the way-side was I exalted. I gave forth a sweet smell like unto cinnamon and fragrant balsam, and I yielded a pleasant odour like unto choicest myrrh.

In this lesson we see Divine Wisdom, shining in Mary's soul, likened to the *cedar*, to the *cypress*, to the *palm*, to the *olive*, and to the *plane tree* ; also to the *rose*, and the sweet-smelling *cinnamon*. *Balsam* and *myrrh* are also mentioned as expressive of beauty and pleasantness.

Four of these trees are in a special way sacred ones ; and, says Cornelius à Lapide, they were employed in building the Temple, the type of the soul. They are also often used in a mystical sense in Holy Scripture. *Cedar*, from its well-known incorruptibility, is a figure of immortality ; *cypress*, from its form, is a type of rectitude ; *palm* is an accepted emblem of victory, and, from its long, bare, rough stem, crowned with leaves and fruit, is a fit image of mortification ; the *olive*, from its oil, is the symbol of richness. An old tradition has it that the Cross, that work of infinite Wisdom, was made out of these four woods. The *plane tree* [1] of the East is grateful to the traveller for its pleasant shade, and can so be taken for repose. The fragrance of the *rose* needs no explanation ; neither do the sweet-smelling spices.

[1] The word probably means the same as our chestnut-tree.

Cades, or rather more properly, Engaddi, was not far from Jericho, the "City of Palms." It was famous for its vineyards [1] and fertility, being watered by the Jordan.

The Mount *Sion* here is not the *Sion* whereon the Temple was built, but rather that Mount *Sion* known as Hermon: *even unto Mount Sion which is also called Hermon* [2], a very fertile mountain watered by abundant dew: *as the dew of Hermon*, says the Psalmist [3].

We can now briefly point out the application to our ever dear and blessed Lady. By her stainless Conception she has received the gift of incorruptibility, as in the *cedar*; by her reason, enlightened by grace, governing her whole being, she was righteous, as the *cypress*; the victory she gained over every temptation, gives her fittingly the *palm*; her fulness of grace, diffused even on her lips, likens her to the *olive*; the richness of her fragrance and beauty of grace made her as the *rose*; the sweet *spices* in the garden of the Spouse that gave such content to the Beloved [4] are the virtues and graces Divine Wisdom finds in the soul of Mary, the pleasant fruits His soul loveth.

RESPONSORY.

When the *Te Deum* is not said (*i.e.*, from Septuagesima to Easter and from Advent to Christmas, with the exception of all occurring feasts of our Lady) the following *Responsory* is said:—

R. *Felix namque es, sacra Virgo María, et omni laude dignissima:** Quia ex te ortus est sol justitiæ,* Christus Deus noster.

*Holy Maiden Mary, thou art happy and worthy to have all manner of praise:** for of thee is risen the Sun of Righteousness,* Christ our God.

V. *Ora pro pópulo, intérvieni pro clero, intercède pro devóto femineo sexu; séntiant omnes tuum juvámén, quicúmque célebrant tuam sánctam commemoratiónem.** Quia. Glória.* Christus.

Pray for the people; bid for the clergy; beseech for devout womenkind; let all feel thine aid that worthily celebrate thy holy commemoration.

[1] See Cant., i. 13.

[2] Deut. iv. 48.

[3] Ps. cxxxii. 3.

[4] Cant. iv. 14-16.

This song of praise to God for the perfection of our Lady, and the Versicle beseeching her to exercise her office of intercession, sum up the whole of the teaching of the three Nocturns and form an appropriate conclusion. The words of the Versicle are said to be from a sermon of St. Augustine. Notice the final emphasis on the Divine Maternity as the key to all her dignities, to all her prerogatives, to all her power. It is all summed up in the words of St. Matthew :—*Mary, of whom was born Jesus Who is called the Christ* [1].

TE DEUM [2]

(1) *Te Deum laudámus : te Thee, God, we praise : Thee,
Dóminum confitémur. Lord, we confess.*

(2) *Te ætérnum Patrem : Thee, Eternal Father, all the
omnis terra venerátur. earth doth worship.*

This magnificent hymn comprises praise and petition, says the Carthusian :—

Deum, the Father Unbegotten, the Son the Only Begotten, the Holy Ghost the Comforter ; the holy and undivided Trinity ; the One, most simple and unchangeable God, living and true, blessed above all, sublime and exalted infinitely above all ; most clement, most pure, most mighty, most wise, most holy, most just, most true, most merciful, most good and most patient ; eternal, without length of days, the one great Cause, the one great Worker, the one great Lover. The Fount of all grace, of all glory, of all joy, of all liberality, of all magnificence, possessing the fulness of Life, *in Whom we live, move and have our being* [3]. Most desirable and lovely ! before Whom all

[1] i. 16.

[2] The *Te Deum* is popularly ascribed to SS. Ambrose and Augustine, but without any foundation. Hincmar, in 859, is the first to attribute it to the Saints ; whereas in the earliest MS., now at Munich (of the 8th or 9th century), it is referred to as “the hymn which St. Hilary composed.” St. Benedict, in his Rule, mentions the hymn, but does not give any author’s name. The earliest reference is in the Rule of St. Cesarius of Arles, written some time previous to 502. This last was a disciple of the famous monastery of Lerins ; and it is most likely to the School of Lerins that the *Te Deum* owes its origin. Its probable date is 400—450. The phrase, *Suscipere hominem*, would seem to point to an African source. Can this be Cassian, whose monastery at Marseilles was the parent of that at Lerins ?

[3] Acts xvii. 28.

creatures, the work of Thy hands, are if as they were not. Alone, self-sufficing, most perfect being. *Thee*, we, Thy creatures, praise, that is, with all our strength, assiduously and fervently; with humble acknowledgment of our own insufficiency, prostrate before Thee we pay our homage, confessing that all we are, and can do, is not sufficient for praising Thee as befits Thy Majesty : *How shall we be able to magnify Him ? For He is great above all His works. The Lord is terrible and very great, and marvellous is His power. When ye glorify the Lord, exalt Him as much as ye can : for even yet will He far exceed ; and when ye exalt Him, put forth all your strength and be not weary, for ye can never go far enough* [1].

Dominum. Ruler of all things, Whose Word is all-powerful, Who *spoke and they were made* [2]; Who has made all things for Thine Own honour and glory, and *for Thyself hast Thou made them* [3]. Thy Lordship we creatures confess, we acknowledge Thy wisdom, For : *In wisdom hast Thou made them all* [4]. Our creation is a mere unnecessary act of Thine overflowing love; and the universe, of which we are so small a part, is a proof of Thine Almighty power. Therefore we acknowledge Thine Infinite dominion over all, which has been for ever, and will be for ever, and beyond. We acknowledge that to Thee belongs glory and honour, worship and thanks, as the all-wise, all-powerful, and good Master of all. Were there ten thousand universes each more beautiful than another, Thou, by Thine essential Kingship, would be Lord of all; for only from Thee could they have their being.

Te ætérnum Patrem. He, Whom St. Paul calls *the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation* [5], has deigned to reveal Himself to us in the tender revelation of *Father*, with all the love the name implies and all the privileges of sons that it gives us. In Holy Scripture we get the name of Father applied to God in many ways : *Is He not thy Father that bought thee* [6]. *Our Father Who art in heaven* [7]; *The Father of the fatherless*

[1] Eccle. xliii. 30-34.

[2] Ps. xxxii. 9.

[3] Prov. xvi. 4.

[4] Ps. ciii. 24.

[5] 2 Cor. i. 3.

[6] Deut. xxxii. 6.

[7] Matt. vi. 9.

and the Judge of the widows [1]; The everlasting Father [2]; A Father to Israel [3]; Father, Lord of heaven [4]. The Apostle speaks of Him as *The Father of glory* [5]; *The Father of spirits* [6]; *The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ* [7]. Him, then, the All-Father, the whole earth worships, and acknowledges with thanksgiving that every good and perfect gift cometh down from Him, *the Father of Lights* [8]. All we are, our very existence and our preservation, is His gift; and this we testify with gratitude. And beyond these material gifts are the heavenly ones, by which we become, in a truer and deeper sense, *sons of God and co-heirs with Christ* [9]. Our vocation, our sacraments, our daily grace, and the countless tokens of His Love and Mercy and patient Goodness which He showers upon us. These we confess, and for them we worship Him with the whole earth.

(3) *Tibi omnes Angeli: Tibi Cæli, et universæ Potestates.*

To Thee, all angels, To Thee, the heavens and all powers.

(4) *Tibi Chérubim et Séraphim: incessabili voce proclamant.*

To Thee, Cherubim and Seraphim proclaim with voice that never ends.

(5) *Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus: Dóminus Deus Sábaoth.*

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord, God of Hosts.

(6) *Pleni sunt cæli et terra: majestátis glóriæ Tuæ.*

Full are the heavens and earth of the Majesty of Thy Glory.

Feeling our own insufficiency to praise and worship God, we go up in spirit to heaven, there to join the worship of the angelic choirs. The visions of Isaias and of St. John are before our eyes. And the *angels first, those morning stars that sang together*; Those *sons of God that shouted for joy* [10]: to whom, *when He brought the first-begotten into the world, He saith*; And let all the angels of God worship Him [11]. They stand in their choirs before *the Ancient of Days*, as Daniel, that *man of desires*, saw them *in the first year of Baltassar, king of Babylon*; *Thousands of thousands ministered unto Him and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before Him* [12].

[1] Ps. lxvii. 5.

[2] Isaias ix. 6.

[3] Jer. xxxi. 9.

[4] Matt. xi. 25.

[5] Eph. i. 17.

[6] Heb. xii. 9.

[7] Rom. xv. 6.

[8] Jas. i. 17.

[9] Rom. viii. 17.

[10] Job xxxviii. 7.

[11] Heb. i. 6.

[12] Dan. vii. 10.

Tibi cæli. The place where God's glory is manifested. Or it may be taken for all the inhabitants of heaven, the angelic and the human ; for as St. John has told us there is but *one voice* in all that heavenly throng [1].

Potestâtes may be taken either for the choir of the Powers, or for all those who by grace have become princes, *the princes of His people* [2].

Having now seen the whole of heaven worshipping God, we call to mind the two greatest choirs as typical of the rest : *Chérubim et Séraphim*. The Cherubim are, perhaps, the highest of all for they are full of knowledge. When Adam ate of *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* [3] Cherubim with flaming sword, *which turned every way*, were set *to keep the way to the Tree of Life* [4]. Man had abused his reason and had sinned ; and the mighty intelligences called Cherubim were set as wards over the knowledge he had abused. In the work of reparation they also had their part. Figures of these spirits, made in pure gold, were set upon the cover of the Ark ; and with outspread wings overshadowed the *Mercy Seat*, whence God spoke to His people [5] ; that God Whom the Psalmist invokes : *O Thou that sitteth upon the Cherubim* [6]. They, too, were the guards over the sacred Fire which Ezekiel saw in his vision [7]. So does knowledge precede love, which has the *Seraphim* as types ; spirits of fire burning with love. It was one of the Seraphim who brought the burning coal of Knowledge from the Altar and touched the polluted lips of the Prophets [8] ; teaching us that true knowledge must purify and turn into love ; it must show itself by deeds. Therefore it was that the same Prophet heard the Seraphim lead the hymn of worship : *And one cried unto another and said : Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts ; the whole earth is full of His glory* [9].

Incessâbili voce, that is, with a wonder that never ends ; for the more we know of God, the more worthy is He of love.

[1] See p. 12.

[2] Ps. cxii. 7.

[3] Gen. ii. 17.

[4] *Ibid.* iii. 24.

[5] See Exod. xxv. 18, 22.

[6] lxxix. 2, and xcvi. 1.

[7] x. 2, 6.

[8] Isa. vi. 6.

[9] *Ibid.*, 3.

One of the saints used to sigh for three eternities : an eternity to know God, an eternity to love Him, and an eternity to worship Him.

Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus. A three-fold ascription of praise to the Eternal Father Unbegotten, to the Consubstantial Son the Only-begotten, to the Co-equal Spirit the Comforter. This is the height of the joy of heaven ; the all-sufficing Vision of the Blessed Three in One. Why do the angels say *holy* and not *just* or *wise*, or other of the divine attributes ? Holiness includes all. The Carthusian says in his commentary on the *Te Deum* [1], that as holiness consists in the act of the intellect, and of the will, and as of the Divine Wisdom there is no limit, nor of the Divine Love any bound, so there is no end to the Divine Holiness. It is a holiness above comprehension, above all splendour, and infinite : since the Divine Essence is Light immeasurable, most pure, intellectual, and the fountain-head of all created brightness. Therefore the Lord, our God, is *holy*, and in comparison all created righteousness appears as *but filthy rags* [2].

Dominus Deus Sábaoth, that is, as the "ecstatic doctor" goes on to explain the words, God of the heavenly powers, Omnipotent Ruler, Prince of the heavenly army, great and everlastingly to be praised ; nay, beyond all power of praise, of glory, being lifted up for ever, Whom no created intellect can grasp, no heart love as He deserves, Whom no creature can properly honour ; for He is all beauty, and to those who gaze on Him, sweet and pleasant beyond all compare.

Pleni sunt cæli et terra majestátis glóriæ tuæ. God dwells in Light inaccessible, which no creature can fathom ; but He enlightens every one that cometh into this world with a ray of this Light, of which He is the Father. Our reason is purified, and ennobled and strengthened by His gift of Faith. Fidelity to this Light, or, in other words, to our Conscience, leads us to that heavenly City where His Light is in its fulness, to that City which hath *no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it ; for the Glory of God hath enlightened it and the Lamb is the Light thereof* [3]. There Faith is changed into

[1] Ed. 1892, vol. ii. p. 602.

[2] Isa. lxiv. 6.

[3] Apoc. xxi. 23.

Vision, and we see the Majesty of His glory filling all things ; for we see Him face to face. Says the author of the *Myroure* : "Think over this verse. Think inwardly thereon and let it never out of your mind. Heaven and earth are full of the glory of Thy Majesty. A thing that is full hath no place void. There is then no place on earth, nor above earth, nor beneath it, no land, no country, no place within us, without us, above us, beneath us, but all is full of the glory of the Majesty of God. O God of pity, and Father of mercies, lighten our dark souls that we may see and continually behold the presence of Thy goodly Majesty. O ! with what reverence, with what dread, with what inward devotion, and with what busy keeping of ourselves in thought, in word, and in deed, ought we to behave ourselves in every place, and in every time, and in everything that ever are in presence of Thy glorious Majesty " [1].

(7) *Te gloriósus Apostolórum chorus.*

Thee, the glorious choir of Apostles.

(8) *Te Prophetárum laudá-bilis númerus.*

Thee, the praisable number of Prophets.

(9) *Te Mártyrum candidá-tus laudat exércitus.*

Thee, the white-robed army of Martyrs, praise.

Having united with the Angels, we now join ourselves on to that body of the Ransomed who have returned [2] from the Captivity of Sin and Death. And first to the choir of *Apostles*, that is to say, of "the envoys," upon whom the Church is built. These are they who have left all things and followed Christ, and now sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, that is, all God's chosen people [3]. We unite with *the joy which no man shall take from them* [4], their reward exceeding great. They behold that Humanity which on earth they saw hungry, thirsty, weary and suffering, now crowned with glory and honour, having all things under foot, outshining the sun in the beauty of the Divine Effulgence. And, O joy, they are made sharers therein. His fellow-toilers and carrying on His work, now they shine as so many stars in

[1] P. 119.

[2] Is. xxxv. 10.

[3] Cf. Matt. xix. 28.

[4] John xvi. 22.

The Prophets, or those who speak in the name of God : *Thus saith the Lord*. God revealed to them on earth His mysteries ; and now, face to face, they see and exult in what they had seen before, but in a *dark manner* [2]. They now rejoice to see the fulfilment of what they had foretold. *By their faithfulness they were found true prophets, and by their words they were known to be faithful in vision* [3], and therefore they are *praisable*. There is a *number* of them ; for all who speak in God's name are *prophets* in the real sense of the word.

These three—*Apostles, Prophets and Martyrs*—are types of all the Redeemed : the words should be taken in a wide sense. We are all sent by God into this world to labour, to speak for Him, and to bear witness to His Truth. From our ever dear and blessed Lady, the Queen of the saints, down to the last in heaven, all have fulfilled, according to their degree, the three-fold office which bears the impression of the Blessed Trinity. They have all been envoys of Almighty Power, the teachers of the Word, and witnesses of Truth.

From the Church Triumphant in heaven, to the Church Militant on earth, or Passive in purgatory, but one cry goes up ; for all the members of the Mystical Body are united under their One Head, Jesus Christ, through Whom and by Whom and in Whom is all honour and glory to God. Our

[3] Eccle. xlv. 15.

[4] Apoc. iii. 4.

Office, whether the greater or the lesser, is the prayer of the whole Church; not the prayer of any one person, or place, or country, but of the *Church throughout the world*. Its power is commensurate with the Church's limits and can penetrate anywhere. *Holy Church* by it *doth acknowledge God*, as in the following verses, to be :—

(11) *Patrem imménsæ majestátis,* *Father of immense majesty,*

(12) *Venerándum Tuum verum, et unicum Filium,* *Thy worshipful, true and only Son.*

(13) *Sanctum quoque Paráclitum Spiritum.* *Also the Holy Ghost, the Comforter.*

Patrem. How solemn these words. As the Latin marches along, the dignity and weight of the syllables give us a sense of awe and of majesty without limit.

Venerándum. There is much in this word. The Second Person is especially called *worshipful*, on account of the Incarnation; and because all our worship must be in and by Him, for *He is our Advocate with the Father* [1]. This is the reason why the Church, after acknowledging the Blessed Trinity, goes on presently to direct her praise and worship to her Divine Head, Jesus Christ.

Paráclitum. Our Lord's Own name for the Holy Ghost: *But He shall give you another Paraclete (Comforter), the Holy Ghost* [2]; the consubstantial Love of Father and Son, the Lord and Life-Giver, Who, with Them, is to be adored and glorified.

(14) *Tu Rex Glóriæ, Christe.* *Thou, O Christ, art King of Glory.*

(15) *Tu Patris sempitérnus es Fílius.* *Thou art the everlasting Son of the Father.*

He, then, our Head, is worthy of all praise; and to Him we now direct our worship. *Rex Glóriæ.* For Jesus, as Man, is crowned with honour and glory, and is Head of the whole Race. This is His glory of Headship. And yet, as we gaze at His glorified Humanity in the midst of the Godhead, we remember and adore His Divinity, as,

[1] 1 John ii. 1.

[2] John xiv. 16.

Everlasting Son of the Father. He is the King of Glory in a far higher way; His glory is uncreated. And to Him belongs that ascription of praise which St. Paul makes when writing to Timothy : *Now unto the King of ages, Immortal, Invisible, the Only God; be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen* [1].

(16) *Tu ad liberándum susceptúrus hóminem : non horruitsti Virginis úterum.*

Thou, taking upon Thee to deliver man, didst not abhor the Virgin's womb.

(17) *Tu devicto mortis acúleo : aperuísti credéntibus regna cælórum.*

Thou, having overcome the sharpness of death, hast opened the kingdom of heaven to believers.

(18) *Tu ad dexteram Dei sedes : in glória Patris.*

Thou, at the right hand of God, dost sit in the glory of the Father.

(19) *Judex créderis esse ventúrus.*

We believe Thou art the Judge to come.

We now regard our Divine Head in His Manhood, and praise Him for four things. First, for His Incarnation; then for His Passion; then for His Ascension; and lastly, for His coming to Judgment. It is to be noticed in this act of Praise that the all-holy One Who did not *abhor the Virgin's womb* is the *Judge* that is *to come*. Then, *Who shall stand when He appeareth?* [2]. But lest we should be terrified too much at this, we have here thoughts of His bitter Passion, of the gates of heaven opened to those who believe, and of Him ever at the Right Hand of the Father, making intercession and preparing a place for us with His God and our God. A thought, too, of hope and great joy to us, that the Virgin who shared so much in the work of the Redemption is our Mother also. At this verse it was the custom, so says the author of the *Myroure*, to bow "both in token and in reverence of our Lord's meek coming down for to be Man, and also in worship of that most pure and holy Virgin's womb, wherein Almighty God joyed for to dwell" [3]. We should at least increase our reverence and attention at this verse.

[1] 1 Tim. i. 17.

[2] Mal. iii. 2.

[3] p. 120.

(20) *Te ergo quæsumus Tuis
fámulis súbveni : quos pretiôso
Sánguine redemisti.*

(21) *Ætérna fac cum Sanctis
Tuis : in glória numerári.*

(22) *Salvum fac pópulum
Tuum, Dómine : et bénedic
hereditáti Tuæ.*

(23) *Et rege eos : et extólle
illós usque in ætérnum.*

*Thee, therefore, pray we,
help Thy servants, whom Thou
hast redeemed by Thy precious
Blood.*

*Make us to be numbered
with Thy saints in glory ever-
lasting.*

*O Lord save Thy people and
bless Thine inheritance.*

*And govern them and lift
them up for ever.*

Having praised Jesus, we now begin to pray, following in this the Divine example of the *Pater Noster*. At verse 20 we kneel. "One reason, for here ye begin first in this hymn to pray ; another cause is in worship of that most rich liquor, that most precious price of souls, the reverent and holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" [1]. Some say this verse prostrate with Magdalen at the foot of the Cross, and in spirit letting the Blood fall on them ; others hear at this place an echo of that Song of praise to the Lamb : *Thou hast redeemed us to God in Thine own Blood* [2] ; others, again, dwell on the word *servants*, and recall St. Paul's words : *Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price* [3], *even with the precious Blood of Christ as of a Lamb* [4] ; and as *servants* they bow before their Master, in token of their readiness to fulfil His will. The thought of the precious Blood reminds us of not be shed for us in vain, but that we, too, may be counted the reason It was shed ; and this inspires us to pray that It may among that great flock of God, which no man can number. And that it may be so, we pray that here on earth, as the Lord's *heritage* (*For the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof*) [5], we may be ruled and lifted up above our sinfulness by His grace, and, as the fruit of the precious Blood, be set among the saved.

[1] *Myroure*, p. 121.

[2] Apoc. v. 9.

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

[4] 1 Peter i. 19.

[5] Ps. xxiii. 1.

(24) *Per singulos dies, benedicimus Te.*

Throughout each day we bless Thee.

(25) *Et laudamus Nomen Tuum in sæculum : et in sæculum sæculi.*

And we laud Thy name for ever and for ever and for ages of ages.

We cannot think of the Blood and of all that It means without bursting out again into thanksgiving. It meets us with its potent effects all day long. We live and move in an atmosphere tinged with the Blood of Calvary. What are Holy Church and all the things of Holy Church but great reservoirs of the Precious Blood, ready for us at every moment, *throughout each day?* And all things of Nature, besides, have been touched by It and made heavenly ; so that by them we can ascend to that God Whose Blood It is. Therefore we laud for endless ages the Name of Him Whose Blood *cleanseth us from all sin* [1].

(26) *Dignare Dómine die isto : sine peccáto nos custodire.*

Be pleased, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin.

(27) *Miserére nostri Dómine : miserere nostri.*

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us.

(28) *Fiat misericórdia Tua Dómine super nos : quemádmodum sperávimus in Te.*

Let thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have hoped in Thee.

If, on the one hand, we have the power of the precious Blood for all our needs, we cannot forget, by our own bitter experience in the past, how weak we are, and how easily we fall. Happy we, if we have secured that experience and know that there is no use in striving after anything else but to serve God *now*, at the present moment. All sanctity consists in *knowing, loving and serving God*. This is the end of our creation. Now all these three are present participles and imply actions done at the present moment. The past is not ours, it is in God's hand ; the future is His also : only the present is ours, and it slips away even while we have it. This is the meaning of the verse : *Be pleased, O Lord, this day to keep us without sin*. Our resolutions are so feeble that we can only hope to avoid sin day by day : and this only, too, by the

help of God's grace. Therefore, they have to be renewed again and again, and humbly, too, not trusting much in ourselves ; but just as, day by day, we ask for the food of our bodies so should we likewise petition for freedom from sin. Then, the thought of failures in the past bids us ask for the mercy of God, that mercy which we have abused, and unless we are humble, we shall abuse again. But we may securely hope for His mercy ; for He has said : *Everyone that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out* [1]. Fired, then, by this gracious promise, this Song of heavenly praise and prayer of *the Church throughout the world* changes into a concluding strain of Hope, firm and unconquerable, as a song of wayfarers on the road to their City of Repose, or of warrior-pilgrims undismayed at all obstacles.

(29) *In te Dómine sperávi :* *In Thee, O Lord, I have*
non confundar in ætérnum. *hoped. I shall never be con-*
 founded.

Not in my merits, says the Carthusian, but in Thy deep Wounds, in which is my safe and firm rest. Secure there will I dwell, for they are open to me by Thy tender mercy, in which Thou, *the Orient from on high, hath visited us* [2]. For Thy Wounds are full of mercy, full of pity, full of sweetness. *They have dug Thy hands, O Lord, and Thy feet.* [3], and with a lance have they pierced Thy side. By these openings I can taste how sweet Thou art, O Lord, my God ; for, indeed, Thou art sweet, and mild, and of much mercy, to all who call on Thee in truth, to all who seek for Thee, and especially to all who love Thee. Most abundant redemption is given by those blood-stained Wounds, a great multitude of sweetness, a fulness of grace, a perfection of virtue. And therefore I shall *never be confounded, for I know in Whom I have believed* [4] ; because by Thee in love I have been adopted a son, because Thou art faithful to Thy promises, and Almighty in execution thereof. The multitude of my sins cannot terrify me when I think of Thy bitter Passion, for my sins cannot overcome that. The Lance and the Nails cry out to

[1] John vi. 37.

[2] Luke i. 78.

[3] Ps. xxi. 17.

[4] 2 Tim. i. 12.

me that I am in very truth reconciled, provided that I love Thee. Thou didst extend those Arms upon the Cross and didst open Thy Hands ready to embrace sinners, of whom I am the first [1]. I do not despair, I desire to live and die in Thine arms. Therefore, securely will I say : *I will exalt Thee, O Lord, because Thou hast upheld me and hast not suffered mine enemies to rejoice over me* [2]. Therefore shall my song be : *In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted, I shall never be confounded, never be put to shame by having been deceived in Thee ; for the Truth of the Lord abideth for ever* [3].

N.B.—During Advent the Lessons are from St. Luke's Gospel, i. 26 [4].

LESSON I.

Missus est Angelus Gábríel a Deo in civitátem Galilææ, cui nomen Názareth, ad Virgínem desponsátam viro, cui nomen erat Joseph de domo David, et nomen Virgínis María. Et ingressus Angelus adeam dixit : Ave grátia plena : Dóminus tecum : Benedícta tu in muliéribus.

The Angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David, and the name of the Virgin was Mary. And the Angel came in unto her and said : Hail, full of grace : The Lord is with thee, blessed art thou amongst women.

RESPONSORY.

R. *Missus est Gábríel Angelus ad Mariám Virgínem desponsátam Joseph, nuntians ei Verbum : et expavéscit Virgo de lúmine. Ne timeas María, invenisti grátiam apud Dómi-*

The Angel Gabriel was sent to Mary the Virgin espoused to Joseph, announcing to her the Word. And the Virgin trembled on account of the Light. Fear not, Mary, thou hast

[1] 1 Tim. i. 15.

[2] Ps. xxix. 2, 10.

[3] Ps. cxvi. 2.

[4] In the Monastic Breviary these lessons are said only on Wednesdays and Saturdays in Advent, instead of every day, as in the Roman Breviary.

num: **Ecce concípies et páries, et vocabitur Altíssimi Fílius.*

¶. *Dabit ei Dóminus Deus sedem David patris ejus, et regnabit in domo Jacob in ætérnum. *Ecce, &c.*

found grace with God. **Lo, thou shalt conceive and shall bring forth, and He shall be called Son of the Most High.*

*And the Lord God shall give Him the seat of David His father; and He shall reign for ever in the house of Jacob. *Lo, &c.*

LESSON II.

Quæ cum audisset, turbata est in sermone ejus, et cogitabat qualis esset ista salutatio. Et ait Angelus ei: Ne timeas Maria, invenisti enim gratiam apud Deum: ecce concípies in útero, et páries Fílium, et vocabis nomen ejus Jesum. Hic erit magnus, et Fílius Altíssimi vocabítur, et dabit Illi Dóminus Deus sedem David patris Ejus: et regnabit in domo Jacob in ætérnum, et regni Ejus non erit finis.

Who, when she heard him, was troubled at his saying, and thought what manner of salutation this might be. And the Angel said to her: Fear not, Mary, thou hast found grace with God. Lo, thou shalt conceive in the womb and thou shall bring forth a Child, and thou shall call His name Jesus. He shall be great and shall be called Son of the Most High. And the Lord God shall give to Him the seat of David His father, and He shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

RESPONSORY.

R. *Ave Maria, grátia plena: Dominus tecum: *Spíritus sanctus supervéniet in te, et virtus Altíssimi obumbrábit tibi: quod enim ex te nascétur Sanctum, vocabítur Fílius Dei.*

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. The Holy One that is born of thee shall be called Son of God.*

*¶. Quómodo fiet istud, quóniam virum non cognóscó? Et respóndens Angelus, dixit ei : *Spiritus, &c.*

*How shall this be done, for I know not man? And the Angel, answering, said to her : *The Holy Ghost, &c.*

LESSON III.

Dixit autem María ad Angelum : Quómodo fiet istud, quóniam vírum non cognóscó? Et respóndens Angelus dixit ei : Spíritus Sanctus supervéniet in te et virtus Altíssimi obumbrábit tibi. Ideoque et quod nascétur ex te Sanctum, vocábitur Filius Dei. Et ecce Elisabeth cognáta tua, et ipsa concépit filium in senectúte sua : et hic mensis sextus est illi, quæ vocátur stérilis : quia non erit impossibile apud Deum omne Verbum. Dixit autem María : Ecce ancilla Dómini, fiat mihi secúndum Verbum tuum.

Then said Mary to the Angel : How shall this be, for I know not man? And the Angel, answering her, said : The Holy Ghost shall come down upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy One that is born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And lo, Elizabeth, thy cousin, she in her old age hath also conceived a son ; and this is the sixth month with her who is called barren. For with God no word is impossible. Then said Mary : Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to thy Word.

RESPONSORY.

*R. Súscipe Verbum Virgo María, quod tibi a Dómino per Angelum transmissum est : concípies, et páries Deum páriter et hominem : *Ut benedícta dicáris inter omnes mulieres.*

*Take the Word O Virgin Mary which has been brought to thee from God by the Angel : Thou shalt conceive and bring forth Him Who is both God and Man. *That thou mayst be called blessed among women.*

¶. *Páries quidem Filium,
et virginitátis non patiéris de-
triméntum : efficiéris grávida,
et eris mater semper intácta.*

**Ut, &c.*

Glória Patri.

**Ut, &c.*

*Thou shalt indeed bring
forth a Son, but shalt not suffer
the loss of thy virginity. Thou
shalt be with Child and yet be
the Mother ever intact.*

**That thou, &c.*

Glory be to the Father, &c.

**That Thou, &c.*

CHAPTER III.

AT LAUDS, OR MORNING SONG.

THE original idea of the office of Lauds, which, together with Vespers, are the original hours of the *Cursus*, was that of honouring the Resurrection of our Lord. It was the morning prayer of the Sunday, a day kept holy by the Apostles in honour of the Resurrection ; and the Psalms we are about to consider are those which, from the earliest days, have been used for this office. In "The Little Office of our Lady," the Church sets before us, at this hour, the reward of eternal Life which she gained and which is to be ours ; that is to say, the Resurrection as it affects us. So from the beginning of the day we have our mind directed to the great goal towards which we must strive.

For the *Deus in adiutorium*, &c., see page 92.

FIRST ANTIPHON.

*Assumpta est Maria in cœ-
lum, gaudent Angeli, laud-
antes benedicunt Dóminum.*

*Mary is assumed into
heaven : the angels rejoice,
and praising, they bless the
Lord.*

In the first Antiphon the Assumption is celebrated ; and we are called to join our voices with the angels who rejoice and bless God for taking our ever dear and blessed Lady to heaven, body and soul, and for making her their Queen. The angels will also rejoice, when we, at the Last Day, are assumed, body and soul, into heaven, to make up the number of the Elect. The Assumption of Our Lady is the image of ours ; even as hers was modelled on that of the Resurrection and Ascension of her Divine Son.

PSALM XCII.

Title.—A Praise of a Song for David himself, on the Day before the Sabbath when the earth was established.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ, having overcome Death, put on the glory of the Resurrection. The voice of the Church concerning the Kingdom of Christ. Of the Birth of Christ and His first Coming.

Venerable Bede : For David is suitably applied to Christ. The question is raised how he can say that the *earth was established on the Day before the Sabbath*, that is, on the sixth day of the week, seeing that we read in Genesis that the dry land appeared on the third day ; but here we understand *earth* to be man, to whom is said : *Earth thou art, and unto earth thou shalt return*. And as he was made on the sixth day by God the Creator, so, too, in the sixth age of the world he was stablished from the seed of David by the same God and Creator ; for then was the earth stablished when belief in Him was confirmed for mankind. And therefore the *Praise* is of His holy Incarnation which is sung in the course of this psalm. The first passage describes His beauty, His strength, His works, His might, His truth ; and lastly, the praise of His house which it becomes to rejoice with everlasting gladness.

(1) *Dominus regnâvit, decorem indûtus est : indutus est Dóminus fortitudinem, et præcinxit Se.*

The Lord reigneth and hath put on beauty : the Lord hath put on strength and hath girded Himself.

The Psalmist, as with a herald's voice, proclaims to all men that the Lord hath taken the majesty of a King ; and after defeating in battle and casting out the prince of this world, hath reduced under His sway the Kingdom which was always His rightful possession ; so under the type of a King, the Psalmist declares that the Lord hath put on *beauty*. What is this *beauty* ? It is the *beauty* of the all-glorious Body of our Risen Lord, immortal and impassible ; a *beauty* of which the Glory of Thabor was but a glimpse ; a *beauty* which now

ravishes angels and saints. He has put on *strength* also ; for is He not now a Conqueror, having overcome sin and death and broken the iron bars in pieces, and shaken the brazen gates [1] ? Epiphanius refers the *beauty* to the Incarnation ; the *strength* to the Resurrection. On which St. Augustine says : When our Lord came on earth some heard Him gladly ; and to these He appeared in His *beauty* ; while others reviled and slandered Him, and these saw Him for their punishment clothed in *strength*. It is so even now wherever His Gospel is preached, according to St. Paul : *We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish ; to the one we are the savour of death, and to the other the savour of life unto life* [2]. Our Blessed Lord girded Himself in the might of humility when He stooped to wash the feet of the Disciples. He clothed Himself with *beauty* and *strength*, in the holiness and boldness of those saints whom He joined to Himself, especially the Apostles ; when He girded Himself to the task of establishing His kingdom on earth. These were His royal people, dyed in His own Blood, as He was lifted, King of the Jews, on the throne of the Cross ; and the valour of His martyrs, yea and of her, their Queen, who stood beneath the Cross, was the *strength* that compassed Him about ; for all came from Him. As He is King from all eternity, it is clear that we must interpret this reigning, of which the Psalmist speaks, of the Incarnation. His most Sacred Body is called *beauty*, because of showing us His image, because of its sinlessness, because of the loving-kindness towards us testified in the mystery, and because it is the direct work of the Spirit of all beauty and love, the Holy Ghost. Wherefore it is said of our Lord : *Thou art fairer than the children of men* [3], and of His girding Himself that : *Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins* [4]. This is the girdle wherewith He complies with that invocation : *Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou most mighty* [5], as He goes armed with the Spirit of God to receive for Himself the Kingdom.

[1] Cf. Ps. cvi. 16.

[2] 2 Cor. ii. 15.

[3] Ps. xlv. 3.

[4] Isaias xi. 5.

[5] Ps. xlv. 4.

(2) *Etenim firmávit orbem
terræ, qui non commovebitur.*

*He hath made the world so
sure that it cannot be moved.*

The world, tossed about in the uncertainty of belief, and left to itself that it might know the need of a Redeemer, He has now made *sure* by founding its belief on the Resurrection ; because now as worship is paid to the true God it has been given the steadfastness of Truth. Then, again, this King Whose beauty and strength we celebrate, is the eternal God Who made this world *so sure*, Who rules it and Who has loved it so that He has redeemed it. The Carthusian points out that this world, which he takes for the Church, and which is built on the Resurrection (*If Christ be not risen then is our preaching vain and your faith is also vain*) [1], cannot be moved ; for it is founded on the *Rock*. Christ establishes His chosen in faith so perfectly that they *cannot be moved* by any temptation, or fear, to fall from Him by violence from without.

(3) *Paráta sedes Tua ex
tunc : a sæculo Tu es.*

*Ever since then hath Thy
throne been prepared : Thou
art from everlasting.*

Then, that is, from the making of the round world so sure. The throne of our King is everlasting ; and as St. Bonaventure says, all the hoarded wisdom of eternity is His very Own. His seat, says the Carthusian with the Carmelite, is five-fold : His divine throne, co-equal with the Father : *for thus saith the Lord ; The heaven is My throne and earth My footstool* [2] ; His hallowed resting-place in the most pure womb of His Mother ; His cross ; the hearts of all who love Him ; and the throne of Doom. The latter thrones were prepared and predestinated for Him since the world began, because the Creation and Fall of man necessitated His coming in the flesh ; but He Himself does not begin then ; for co-equal and consubstantial with the Father, He is *from everlasting* ; Bellarmine says, Is, not with the mere fact of existence, but with that fulness of Life which the self-existing God possesses and from which we have our being.

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 14.

[2] Is. lxvi. 1.

(4) *Elevavérunt flúmina
Dómine: elevavérunt flúmina
vocem suam.*

*The floods have risen, O
Lord: the floods have lifted up
their voice.*

(5) *Elevavérunt flúmina
fluctus suos, a vóciбус aquárum
multárum.*

*The floods have lifted up
their waves from the voices of
many waters.*

(6) *Mirábiles elatiónes ma-
ris, mirábilis in altis Dóminus.*

*The liftings up of the sea
are wonderful: the Lord is
wonderful on high.*

Herein, says Lorin, we have set before us the roar and tumult of Jews and pagans against the new Kingdom of Christ; and the climax of the triple repetition denotes the gathering force of the deluge: first, the angry commotion; then the loud accusations; lastly, the wild tumult; all too weak to resist the eye and voice of Him Who rebuketh the winds and waves, saying, *Peace be still* [1]. The water in the fourth verse is taken of rivers; while, in the fifth, of the sea; and so, more than one commentator has seen here a rivalry and opposition between the sweet waters of the one and the salt billows of the other. They will have it, with St. Augustine, that the rivers flow from the well-head of living waters, that they are the rivers of that *flood which makes glad the city of God* [2], swollen by the descending rain of Pentecost, the Apostles themselves, lifting up their voices as of *many waters* to proclaim that the risen *Lord reigneth*; lifting up their *waves* to sweep away every barrier to the triumphant advance of His Church. Against them rise up in resistance *the waves of the sea* trying to beat back that flood of sweet waters poured into their salt bosom; but vainly, for *wonderful* as are *the liftings up* of that wild sea of human rage, more *wonderful still in the highest* is the Lord Who is throned over all; and through His mercy these *liftings up* of the very *waves* became *wonderful* in grace, by the conversion of the raging heathen into meek disciples of the Lamb, lifting them up to the very heavens; and that *from the voices of many waters*, the *voices* made to Him from the countless baptismal fonts in divers nations of the earth.

[1] Mark iv. 39.

[2] Ps. xlv. 4.

(7) *Testimónia tua credibilia facta sunt nimis: domum Tuam decet sanctitúdo, Dómine, in longitudinem.*

Thy testimonies are made exceeding sure: holiness becometh Thy house for ever.

The Carthusian says on this verse: Whatever things the types and prophecies of the Old Testament, the words of the Evangelists, the teachings of the Apostles, the articles of the Creeds allege concerning Christ, the Lord, belonging as they do to faith, though incapable of proof by natural reason (as dealing with things hoped for and unseen), are proved by the marvellous works of the Lord Himself, and yet more by His patient life and painful death. His predictions, too, are fulfilled, telling the disciples that they should have tribulations in this world; and therefore they look for the accomplishment of the remainder of His prophecy, the victory and peace which He promised them in Himself. And because this is so, because *exceeding sure* are His testimonies, *Holiness becometh Thy house*; that is, says Agelli [1], it is the fit and peculiar attribute of that sacred shrine of His most pure Body wherein the Godhead dwelt; it is the fit adornment of the soul of our ever dear and blessed Lady who for nine months bore her Maker; it is the peculiar and distinguishing mark of the Church; it is the token of Christians who bear in mind the Apostle's saying: *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* [2] It is no mere passing holiness, but is for ever; hallowed by the abiding presence of God in the Beatific vision.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who is from everlasting; Glory to the Son Who reigneth and hath girdeth Himself with strength; Glory to the Holy Ghost Who is the Holiness of the House of God.

SECOND ANTIPHON.

Maria Virgo assúmptha est ad æthéreum thálmum, in quo Rex regum stelláto sedet sólio.

Mary, the Virgin, is taken up into the heavenly abode, where the King of Kings sits on His starry throne.

[1] Bishop of Acerno in 1608. He wrote a Commentary of considerable value.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 16.

The Assumption was commemorated in the last Antiphon and now the Coronation. The creature is placed before the King of Kings in the highest part of heaven, and on her head He places *the crown of justice laid up for her* [1], that crown of stars seen by St. John [2]. The *throne* is the symbol of God's might, and, like the crown, it is starry. The lifting up of the creature, so far above Nature, is the work of Divine Power. Surely at the moment, when our ever dear and blessed Lady was crowned, and thus had the seal put upon all the works of Divine Grace that since her Conception had been wrought in her soul, she must have recalled these words of the *Magnificat* : *He that is mighty hath done great things to me. . . He hath exalted the humble* [3]. So this thought of the Crown fittingly attunes our mind to the Psalm of praising which follows.

PSALM XCIX.

Title.—A Psalm of Confession.

Argument.

Tomasi : That we, made by Christ, ought to rejoice, serve, and pray unto Him. The voice of the Apostles to the people. And exhortation of gratitude that we should serve God.

Venerable Bede : The whole of this Psalm belongs to the two kinds of *Confession*, to wit, of penitence and of praise. In the first part the Prophet exhorts all creation to praise the Lord with exultation, and lest thou shouldst suppose that this kind of confession is always to be used, He promises us in the second part that if we repent of our sins we can enter through the gates of His forgiveness [4].

(1) <i>Jubilate Deo omnis</i>	<i>O be joyful in the Lord all</i>
<i>terra : servite Dómino in</i>	<i>ye lands : serve the Lord with</i>
<i>lætitia.</i>	<i>gladness.</i>

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

[2] Apoc. xii. 1.

[3] Luke i. 49, 52.

[4] Agelli says : This Psalm is properly a liturgical one, and from its wording appears to have been especially intended for the sacrifices of thank-offering made with an oblation of fine flour. It is thus a prophecy of the one offering of the Holy Eucharist to be made, not by Aaronic priests in Jerusalem alone, but by Gentile priests and Levites in every country of the world.

O be joyful in the Lord all ye lands. All are invited, there is no acceptance of persons; the summons is to all that labour and are heavy laden, that they may rejoice, and trust in no perishable good, but in the Lord. The plural verbs joined to a singular noun (in the Latin) points to the union of all races of mankind in one harmonious chorus of praise.

Serve the Lord. The very end of our creation. But His service is not like that of earthly masters. In His service is true liberty found, in it there is no sighing, no mourning. None will desire to be freed, for, sweet thought! we shall know we are ransomed. The service of the Lord is free; because not necessity, but love serves therein: *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one the other* [1]. Let Love, says St. Augustine, make thee a servant; because Truth makes thee free. *With gladness*, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for *God loveth a cheerful giver* [2]. *With gladness*, because, says St. Paul, *the sorrow of the world worketh death* [3].

Speaking of the service of God, St. Augustine says: To serve Him is to reign. Again: He who serves unwillingly makes a slavery for himself. But, says an old writer, if thou put good-will into thy service thou wilt find thou art not God's servant, but His son. The Carmelite tells us that fitness for God's service involves many things: bodily purity and cleanliness, reputableness of character, orderliness, sparingness in living and substance, humility and reverence, cheerfulness and gladness, since all these qualities answer to attributes of the Master we serve.

(2) *Introite in conspectu* *Come in before His presence*
Ejus, in exultatione. *with rejoicing.*

There are several ways of coming into God, says the Carmelite. We should come in as doves into the windows of Christ's Wounds: *Come away, O my dove, into the clefts of the Rock* [4]; as sheep in the sheep-fold: *Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also must I bring in* [5]; as the fearful into a strong refuge: *Let us enter into the defenced*

[1] Gal. v. 13.

[2] 2 Cor. ix. 7.

[3] *Ibid.* vii. 10.

[4] Cant. ii. 14.

[5] John x. 16.

cities, and let us be silent there [1]; as men forgiven into penance: I will give him the valley of Achor for a door of hope [2]; as a prince unto his dignity: There shalt enter into the gates of the city kings and princes upon the throne of David [3]; as conquerors into a captured city: The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent alone shall take it by storm [4]; as a procession into a church: They shall enter into My holy place, and they shall come near to My table [5]; as the elect into glory: Let us therefore labour to enter into that rest [6]. This we are to do *with rejoicing.* And yet, as St. Peter Chrysologus remarks: Archangels fear, Powers are filled with dread, the Elders fall down on their faces before the Throne, the elements fly, the rocks melt, the mountains flow down, the earth quakes; and shall Man, who is earth, enter thus fearlessly and stand upright, rejoicing? How can the Prophet be bold to say that this is what we ought to do? Because of the words that follow:—

(3) *Scitôte quóniam Dóminus Ipse est Deus: Ipse fecit nos, et non ipsi nos.*

For know ye the Lord He is God: He made us and not we ourselves.

It is because *the Lord is God*; that Lord Who was a little Child in our flesh, Who lay cradled a helpless Babe, Who nestled so peacefully on His Mother's bosom, Who was gentle and meek in His converse with us, laying aside all the terrors of the Godhead, all the awfulness of the Judge. It is because of all this that we are bold to enter His Presence with rejoicing, going more to meet the welcome embraces of a loving Father, than the searching examination of our secret sins. Says St. Augustine: Think not meanly of that Lord; for though ye crucified Him, crowned Him with thorns, clad Him with a robe of scorn, hung Him on a tree, pierced Him with nails, smote Him with a lance, and set guards at His tomb, yet He is God, *He made us*; for *by Him were all things made, and without Him was not anything made that was made [7].* He

[1] Jer. viii. 14.

[2] Osee ii. 15.

[3] Jer. xvii. 25.

[4] Matt. xi. 12.

[5] Ezek. xlv. 16.

[6] Heb. iv. 11.

[7] John i. 3.

made us, says Honorius, in our first creation of Nature : *He made us* also in the second and more glorious creation of Grace. *Not we ourselves ; for, O Lord Thou art our Father ; we are the clay and Thou our Maker ; and we all are the work of Thy hand* [1].

(4) *Pópulus Ejus, et oves páscuæ Ejus : introite portas Ejus in confessione, átria Ejus in hymnis : confitémini Illi.*

We are His people, and the sheep of His pasture : O enter into His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with hymns : Confess ye unto Him.

We are His people, that is, serving Him with intelligent obedience, with confident love : *I to My beloved and My beloved to Me* [2].

The sheep of His pasture. Because we constitute His inheritance and His wealth ; we need His guidance, are ruled, cared for, preserved by Him. We find Him so loving and tender, that we cannot forget Him ; we seek Him with sighs and yearnings ; we know and hear His voice and follow Him, but no other.

His pasture. Here is a reference to the food He provides for our sustenance, even His very own Body and Blood ; this is the pasture wherewith the Good Shepherd feeds us in the wide and pleasant meadows of His Church, even as He once fed Israel in the pleasant fields of Canaan. Thus Agelli.

Confess ye unto Him. St. Augustine teaches us that repentance must be the outset of the service of God, unto Whose *gates* we enter with the confession of sins, not attempting to burst forth in the language of praise till, growing in holiness, we penetrate into His courts. Another writer, reminding that our Lord calls Himself " the Door," explains the *gates* of our Lady, the Apostles, and others, by whom men enter into Him, making confession first and renunciation of all their sins. And after this straight and painful entrance we should go at once into the spacious *courts* of charity, passing into the width of heavenly contemplation. There is a stress on His *gates*, which are many, that we may learn to distinguish these

from gates which are not His, by which men often enter in confession. There is the gate of hypocrisy, of which we read : *These people draw near with their mouth and with their lips do honour Me, but their heart is far from Me* [1] ; the gate of pride : *I am not as the rest of men* [2] ; the gate of despair : *I have sinned in betraying innocent Blood* [3] ; the gate of treachery : *Master, we know that Thou art a true speaker* [4] ; the gate of flattery : *Thou art good in my sight, as an angel of God* [5] ; the gate of mockery : *Hail Thou, King of the Jews* [6] ; the gate of confusion ; *I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of Israel* [7] ; and lastly, that of sacrilege : *Unto the ungodly, saith God, why dost thou preach My Law ?* [8]. Opposed to all these gates of the evil one, are the Twelve Gates of the City of God, named from the twelve tribes of Israel [9]. On the north, the type of sin, lie Reuben, Juda and Levi. Reuben, *Behold the Son*, is the prodigal returning to show himself to his father ; Juda, *confession* or *praise*, the giving God glory by acknowledgment of sin ; Levi, *joined*, is the being united to God by abandonment of errors. On the east, the region of light and prayers, are Joseph, the *increase* in good works ; Benjamin, trust in the *right hand of God* alone and desire for the good things set there ; Dan, reverent thought of the coming *Judge*. On the south, perfected in love, are Simeon, Issachar, Zabulon. Simeon, *heard* in prayer ; Issachar, the *hireling*, who has accepted the summons and entered the vineyard ; Zabulon, *dwelling*, because they shall go out no more, but dwell in the court of the Lord. And on the west, towards the sun-setting, type of death, are Gad, Asser, Naphthali. Gad, the *troop*, denotes the innumerable company of angels and saints ; Asser, their *blessedness*, in the Vision of God ; Naphthali, a *wrestler*, reminds us that no one is crowned except after the fight. And these are the Gates through which God's true servants must enter in confession.

[1] Is. xxix. 13.

[2] Luke xviii. 11.

[3] Matt. xxvii. 4.

[4] *Ibid.* xxii. 16.

[5] 1 Kings xxix. 9.

[6] Matt. xxvii. 29.

[7] Mark i. 24.

[8] Ps. xlix. 16.

[9] Apoc. xxi. 12.

(5) *Laudáte nomen Ejus: Praise His name, for the*
quóniam súavis est Dóminus, Lord is sweet: His mercy is
in ætérnum misericórdia Ejus, for ever, and His truth from
et usque in generatióem et generation to generation.
generatióem véritas Ejus.

Three reasons are here given us for praising the name of God : His sweetness, His everlasting mercy, and His abiding truth.

He is sweet ; for in Him is no bitter at all ; *He is sweet ;* for never can He be so angry with a sinner as not at once to be appeased by sincere sorrow.

His mercy is for ever. Because, says Honorius, on the one hand, He extends the acceptable time, the day of salvation, to the end of the world for all, to the end of life for each sinner, rejecting none, and not closing the door of grace till the very last necessary moment ; and, on the other, He will keep His Redeemed in heaven for ever the objects of His boundless mercy.

And His truth from generation to generation. Because the promise He made to the Patriarchs He fulfilled to their descendants by coming in person, no longer in type and prophecy ; because His words in Holy Writ shall never pass away, even when heaven and earth are gone ; because He keeps to the uttermost in this world, and the next, the pledges given to His disciples of bestowing everlasting blessedness.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, Who is sweet for He hath given His Son for us ; Glory to the Son Whose mercy is everlasting as He for ever pleads for us ; Glory to the Holy Ghost Whose truth endureth in the Church unto the end of the world.

ANTIPHON III.

In odórem unguentórum We run after the odour of
tuórum cúrrimus, adolescén- thine ointments ; young maid-
tulæ dilexérunt te nimis. ens have loved Thee exceedingly.

Now we contemplate the glory, which, as a sweet ointment, pervades the whole being of the Mother of God, crowned

Queen of heaven and earth. It attracts us and *we run after* her example ; and *So run that we may obtain* the prize [1] of Eternal Life, even as she has won it. The latter part of the Antiphon recalls our vocation. It was when we were young and generous that the glory and sweetness of our Lady attracted us to serve God after her example. Happy we, if, when the enthusiasm of youth be passed, we preserve still that solid love for Mary which is so helpful for attaining the true knowledge and love of her Divine Son.

PSALM LXII.

Title.—A Psalm of David when he was in the Wilderness of Idumea.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ is He on Whom we should direct the brightness of the mind in the morning thoughts. The voice of the Church concerning Christ ; or that of anyone withdrawing from darkness and longing for Him.

Venerable Bede : *Psalm* and *David* often denote Christ the Lord, often the Church ; because Christ is in His members and the members are contained in their Head. Wherefore words which signify the Lord our Saviour are fitly ascribed to the Church, which is to speak in this Psalm. She therefore dwells in the desert of Idumea, that is, a dryness of this world, where she thirsts and longs for Christ. Whence also *Idumea*, where David was in exile, is interpreted, “earthly.” In the first part she longs after the power of the Lord, desiring to be filled with the fulness of all good things, that she may be found worthy of His praises. In the second part she gives thanks, because under the shadow of the Lord’s wings she has escaped the storms of the world.

(1) *Deus, Deus, meus: ad Te* *O God, my God: from day-*
de luce vigilo. *break do I watch unto Thee.*

My God. The repetition of the name of God and the claiming Him for the Psalmist’s very own denote, observes St. John Chrysostom, deep love and eager pressing towards God, to the neglect of all earthly things. It is therefore taken

chiefly of Him Who alone could, with truth, call God His Own, as being One with Him, consubstantial, co-eternal. Jesus did use these words, *My God*, in that mysterious cry from the cross: *My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* [1].

From day-break do I watch unto Thee. He Who made the Light rose with it on the first Easter morning. The words are spoken of the faithful soul which turns eagerly to the first rays of the light and opens its powers to the Sun of Righteousness, to work for Him and to be filled with His warmth. There is, says St. Augustine, a sleep of the soul as there is a sleep of the body. This last we all ought to have; but let us take care that our soul sleep not, for sin is the sleep of the soul. Good for the body is sleep, which serves for the health thereof; but the soul's sleep is forgetfulness of its Maker. Therefore doth the Apostle say: *Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead; and Christ shall give thee light* [2]. Was the Apostle waking up one oppressed with bodily sleep? Nay, but he was waking up a soul sleeping, in order that she might be enlightened by Christ. And therefore doth the Spouse in the Canticles answer to this appeal: *I sleep, but my heart is waking* [3]. Sleep, says St. Gregory the Great, free from all temporal anxiety, waketh to the contemplation of God.

(2) <i>Sitivit in Te anima mea, quam multipliciter Tibi caro mea.</i>	<i>My soul thirsteth for Thee: my flesh also for Thee, in how many ways!</i>
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This is the cry of David, cut off from the public worship of God, when he was hiding from Saul in the desert.

My soul thirsteth for Thee, the fountain of living water. He does not thirst for any gifts in this wilderness, but for everlasting blessedness, which are nowhere to be found save in Thee.

My flesh also. Much more, in one sense, than even the soul; for the soul is immortal, while the body is pressed down with the weight of its mortality, and therefore is in more need. It longs for the resurrection, and says: *In my flesh I shall see*

[1] Matt. xxvii. 46.

[2] Eph. v. 14.

[3] Cant. v. 2.

God [1]. Wherefore St. Bernard observes : The Prophet desired the first Coming, whereby he knew that he should be redeemed ; but more did his flesh desire the second Coming, which will bring his glorification.

(3) *In terra desérta, et in-
via, et inaquósa : sic in sancto
appáruí Tibi, ut vidérem
virtutem Tuam, et glóriam
Tuam.*

*In a barren land and path-
less and where no water is :
So have I appeared to Thee in
the holy place, that I might
behold Thy Power and Thy
glory.*

In a barren land and pathless and where no water is. The world is *barren*, because the saints dwell not therein, since they are not of it ; it is *pathless*, because it knows not Christ Who is the Way ; it hath no *water*, for the fountain of grace is not there. So the Carmelite. Evil is the desert, says St. Augustine, very horrible and greatly to be feared ; and, nevertheless, God, in pity, hath made a way in the desert, Himself, our Lord Jesus Christ, and hath given us a consolation in the desert, sending preachers of His Word ; He giveth unto us *water* in the desert, by fulfilling with His Holy Spirit His preachers, in order that there might be created in them a well of *water* springing up to life everlasting. And lo, we have here all things ; but they are not of the desert.

So have I appeared to Thee in the holy place. This seems to refer to the longing of David to appear once more in the tabernacle. It may then be taken of our Lord, in the desert of this world, speaking of the glory He had with the Father before the world was, and ere He emptied Himself of that glory, taking the form of a servant. And mystically of His servants, it tells us of the longing to depart and be with Christ, to be free from sin, to enjoy the Vision of God, no more as in a glass darkly, but face to face, where note, says the Carmelite, that we are taught in Exodus how to appear before God. *Thrice in a year should all males come into Him* [2] ; so we also, thrice in our year of mortal life, should do the same. In the past, by recalling with grief our former sins and repenting

[1] Job. xix. 26.

[2] Exod. xxxiv. 23.

of them ; in the present, by doing good works while there is yet time ; in the future, by a firm resolve to preserve a holiness, saying with Job : *Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me. My righteousness which I have begun to hold fast I will not let it go* [1]. In these three periods of the year, then, every male, that is, every perfect man, ought to appear before God ; which if he do, then will God appear to him ; so that he will see God, even as he is seen by God, and behold His power and glory.

(4) *Quóniam mélior est misericórdia Tua super vitas : labia mea laudábunt Te.* *For Thy mercy is better than lives : my lips shall praise Thee.*

Better than all the *lives* we men choose for ourselves, however various they may be ; better than all the *lives* we plan out for ourselves and in which we think we could have done so much better. The *mercy* God shows to us is the very best for us ; of this we may be sure, He never leaves us, but awaits us at every turn, and goes before our every action : *Thy mercy hath followed me all the days of my life* [2]. It was this strong sense of God's *mercy*, that unfathomed abyss, which made the martyrs trust it, rather than the specious promises of earthly tyrants. Their *lips* sang songs of praise to God in Whom they trusted. And now their *lips* praise His *mercy* for ever.

(5) *Sic benedicam Te in vita mea : et in nómine Tuo levábo manus meas.* *So shall I bless Thee all my life : and lift up my hands in Thy Name.*

Not only by constant praise and thanksgiving, as it is written : *Bless God at all times* [3] ; but my whole life shall be blessing Thy Name, for it shall be directed to the honour, praise and glory of that Name. For God is blessed by a righteous life as by a clear voice.

And lift up my hands in Thy Name. The reference is to Moses during the battle with the Amalakites. Jeremias counsels us : *Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God*

[1] Job xxvii. 5.

[2] Ps. xxii. 8.

[3] Tobias iv. 20.

in the heavens [1]; St. Paul also directs, adding that *the hands should be holy* [2]. The great lifting up of hands is in the Mass, the Sacrifice of Thanksgiving, where the priest prays with hands uplifted, becoming thus a living image of the Crucified One, the likeness of the great High Priest, Whose Person he bears. Almsgiving is also a lifting up of the hands in God's Name. So also are zeal and steadfastness in well-doing, in fulfilment of the Apostle's order : *That ye study to work with your own hands* [3].

(6) *Sicut ádipe et pinguédine repleátur ánima mea : et lábiis exultatiónis laudábit os meum.*

My soul shall be filled as it were with marrow and fatness : and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips.

Union with God cheers the soul in her exile. Thoughts of the Banquet spread in the desert, of the Bread coming down from heaven, containing in itself all sweetness, are indeed blissful.

The marrow and fatness may be taken of the Blessed Sacrament, wherein the Church makes her glad offering to God, truly *a feast of fat things, a feast of wine, of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined* [4]. So on the feast of Corpus Christi she sings an Antiphon which is taken from Jacob's blessing of Aser : *The bread of Christ is fat and He shall yield royal dainties* [5]. The *marrow* is the innermost part; so is the Blessed Eucharist. Hidden, indeed, by the sacramental veils from mortal sight, it is the innermost part which is the delight and satisfaction of our soul. The Carmelite points out a meaning of this verse in those graces where-with God cherishes the soul with warmth, and especially those typified by chrism or unction; because fat gives heat to the body; and therefore is it written in the Law : *All the fat is the Lord's* [6], whereby we learn that all good desires come from Him and to Him must return. And as the fat is parted from the flesh in sacrifice, so the saints are severed from sinners; as it is written : *As the fat is taken away from the*

[1] Lam. iii. 41.

[2] 1 Tim. ii. 8.

[3] 1 Thess. iv. 11.

[4] Is. xxv. 6.

[5] Gen. xlix. 20.

[6] Lev. iii. 16.

peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the children of Israel [1.] Finally, the verse tells of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and of the guests concerning whom St. Peter Damian tells us :—

“ Ever full but hungry ever ;
 What they have they still desire ;
 Never suffer surfeit’s loathing,
 Nor yet famine’s torments dire :
 Hungering still they eat, and eating,
 Still the Sacred Food require.”

(7) *Si memor fui Tui super
 stratum meum, matutinis
 meditabor in Te : quia fuisti
 adiutor meus.*

*If I have remembered Thee
 in my bed, and in the morn-
 ings have thought upon Thee :
 because Thou hast been my
 Helper.*

In my bed, that is, as St. Bernard teaches, in the peaceful quiet of a pure conscience ; and as the English mystic, Richard Rolle, of Hampole, wisely adds, also in the time and place of sickness and pain. Yet again, notes Albert the Great, the ease and quiet of the bed denote a time of temporal prosperity, when it specially behoves the Christian to think on his God. Now rising from the servant to the Master, let us hear the Carthusian : On the Cross where I hung weak and dying, I remembered Thee, O my Father, saying ; *Why hast Thou forsaken me ?* [2] and *Father, forgive them* [3] ; and yet again, *Father, into Thy hand I commend My spirit* [4] : and thought of Thee in the morning of the Resurrection, because Thou hast been my Helper. We need God’s help at all times ; in the mornings when we work, in the night when we rest. And at all times He is ready to aid us.

(8) *Et in velamento alarum
 Tuarum exultabo, adhæsit
 anima mea post Te : me sus-
 cepit dextera Tua.*

*And under the shadow of
 Thy wings will I rejoice, my
 soul hath clung after Thee ;
 Thy right hand hath upholden
 me.*

St. Augustine remarks that we are as chickens under the hen’s wings, but with this difference : her young do not need

[1] Eccles. xlvii. 2.

[2] Matt. xxvii. 46.

[3] Luke xxiii. 34.

[4] *Ibid.* 46.

her protection when they are full grown; but we, the more we advance in years, the more need have we of the sheltering wing of the Most High.

Will I rejoice. So the Spouse: *I sat down beneath His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste* [1].

My soul hath clung after Thee, or rather, *sticketh* as with glue. And this makes St. Augustine ask what is it that “glues” our soul to God? and he answers, Love, which fastens us behind God that we may follow Him. And St. John Chrysostom compares this close and binding union to the nails of the Cross, or to the roots of a tree set fast in the earth.

Thy right hand: the symbol of power and of victory. We may also see here a reference to the power of the Holy Ghost, *the finger of God's right hand*, through Whose grace we cling to our Maker and Whose might upholds us at all times.

(9) *Ipsi vero in vanum quæsiérunt ánimam meam, introibunt in inferiöra terræ: tradéntur in manus gládii, partes vûlpium erunt.*

In vain have they sought after my soul, they shall go down into the lower parts of the earth: let them fall upon the edge of the sword that they may be a portion for foxes.

They shall go into. Not merely falling to the ground, as Christ's enemies did in the Garden, but going *into* it, *into* the grave of the Second Death. It was fulfilled, says St. Augustine, even in this life. Earth they were unwilling to lose when they crucified Christ; they have gone *into the lower parts of the earth*. What are *the lower parts of the earth*? Earthly lusts; for every one that desireth earthly things, to the hurt of his soul, is under *the earth*; because he has put *earth* before him, and upon him, and hath laid beneath it. Fearing to lose *earth*, the Jews said of the Lord Jesus: *If we let Him alone the Romans will come and will take away our place and nation* [2]. Behold, they have lost at the hands of the Romans the place, because they slew Christ.

Let them fall upon the edge of the sword: the earthly sword or the two-edged sword of judgment to come proceeding out of the mouth of Christ.

[1] Cant. ii. 3.

[2] John xi. 48.

That they may be a portion for foxes. They would not have the Lamb for King, and therefore they have been given up to the will of crafty and worldly princes, like that Herod whom the Lord called *a fox* [1]. Nay, more, they themselves have fallen in character, and become wily and deceitful, and thus have had their portion with *foxes*.

(10) *Rex vero lætabitur in Deo, laudabuntur omnes qui jurant in eo : quia obstruatum est os loquentium iniqua.*

But the King shall rejoice in God ; all they that swear by Him shall be praised : for the mouth of them that speak evil shall be stopped.

That King Whose kingdom, though it be not of this world, is yet in this world as it is in heaven, Christ, *the King*, Who hath written on His vesture and on His thigh a Name, *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* [2], Who reigneth over the house of Jacob for ever, and of *Whose kingdom there shall be no end* [3]. This *King*, in the days of mortal pilgrimage, was crowned with thorns and made sorrowful even unto death. But now raised from the dead, like David returned from exile, He *shall rejoice in God*, for in that He liveth, He liveth unto God, and is Himself God in God ; as He hath said : *I am in the Father and the Father in Me* [4].

All they that swear by Him shall be praised, who shall bind themselves to Him by the Sacraments [5] to be faithful soldiers and servants. And so it is written : *And all Juda rejoiced at the oath ; for they had sworn with all their hearts and sought Him with all their desire, and He was found of them, and the Lord gave them rest round about* [6].

For the mouth of them that speak evil shall be stopped. Even in this world, when they see the glory of the saints, they will have nothing to allege against the truth of God, or the pure lives of His servants ; but envious tongues will not be silenced till evil is overcome in the Final Triumph of Christ when He shuts the gates of the Holy City against *whosoever loveth and maketh a lie* [7].

[1] Luke xiii. 32.

[2] Apoc. xix. 16.

[5] *Sacramentum* was the military oath of fidelity.

[6] 2 Paralip. xv. 15.

[3] Luke i. 33.

[4] John xiv. 10.

[7] Apoc. xxii. 15.

PSALM LXVI. [1]

Title.—To the end, in the hymns. A Psalm of a Song of David.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ is the Light of the faithful. The Prophet counsels believers. The Apostolic voice. The Prophet's Voice, concerning the Coming of Christ, and His Resurrection.

Venerable Bede : *Hymn* and *Song* denote praise, and that it may be shown that these are given to Christ the Lord alone, *To the End* is prefixed. After the Song of Resurrection the Prophet supplicates that we may be blessed and be led to the knowledge of God, to which our own merits cannot attain.

(1) <i>Deus misereatur nostri, et benedicat nobis : illuminet vultum Suum super nos, et misereatur nostri.</i>	<i>May God be merciful to us and bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us.</i>
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Mercy for past error is first sought, then blessing ; and then, again, we ask for mercy. Why this repetition ? Because we need God's mercy for perseverance in grace as well as for the original call to it. St. Augustine says this Psalm is the prayer of the Vineyard to the Husbandman, of the Church to God the Father, praying Him to send His rain to increase the fruit He Himself has planted and tilled. But though it is collectively the cry of the whole Vineyard, yet each section belongs to a different part, as Cardinal Hugo points out : *Be*

[1] The following Psalm is always joined on to the preceding and sung under one Doxology. After Durandus, we may thus explain the mystical reason. "First, because Psalm lxii. signifies thirst for God, and in Psalm lxvi. the Trinity is indicated. This is done, therefore, to signify thirst and continual longing for God. Secondly, to note that before the persecution of Anti-Christ the believing Gentiles referred to by Psalm lxvi. shall be one in faith. Thirdly, because the former signifies love of God, wherefore it is said *my soul thirsteth for Thee* : the latter signifies love of our neighbour, wherefore it is said *that we may know Thy salvation among all nations*. Fourthly, because the grace of which the Church seems conscious in Psalm lxii. is evidently confirmed in the latter. Again, at the end of Psalm lxii. the *Gloria Patri* is not said, because therein human sorrow is treated of, whence it is there said : *My soul thirsteth* ; but in Psalm lxvi., the Doxology is said, because in it the mercy of God is celebrated.

merciful is the cry of the penitent ; *bless us*, of advancing Christians ; *show us the light*, of the dying ; asking generally for pardon, justification, wisdom and glory.

And show us the light of His countenance. God shows *His countenance* in divers ways, says Bellarmine. When He disperses the clouds of His anger, and looks on us with love, as children and friends called back to grace ; when He enlightens us and warns by pouring wisdom and charity into our souls, as the visible sun blesses the earth. When He withdraws the veil and shows us His very Self, in the Person of Christ, for the *Countenance* or Face of the Father is the Son ; for, saith Jesus : *He that seeth Me seeth the Father also* [1]. Therefore the Prophet says, in the way of desire : *Let His countenance appear*, that is, May the Father's *countenance*, even the Son Himself, shine on us here on earth by His Incarnation.

(2) *Ut cognoscámus in terra
viam tuam : in ómnibus gén-
tibus salutáre Tuum.*

*That we may know Thy way
upon earth : Thy Salvation
among all nations.*

Thy way is that which leadeth to Thee. What is it ? We can learn it, says St. Augustine, from the Gospel ? The Lord said : *I am the Way*. But fearest thou lest thou shouldst stray ? He hath added : *I am the Truth* [2]. Who strayeth in the Truth ? He strayeth who hath departed therefrom. The Truth is Christ, the *Way* is Christ ; walk ye therein. Dost thou fear lest thou die before thou attain unto Him ? *I am the Life*. *I am*, said He, *the Way, the Truth and the Life*. As if saying, What fearest thou ? Through Me thou walkest, to Me thou walkest, in Me thou resteth. And note, says Albert the Great, we *may know His way on earth* in three manners. By natural understanding, which is wisdom ; by grace, which is faith ; and by glory, which is reward.

Thy salvation among all the nations. The question, What is *Thy way* ? is answered by *Thy salvation among all the nations*. It is only one *way* for all nations, one Church to embrace all

[1] John xiv. 9.

[2] John xiv. 6.

people, one Covenant for all mankind ; for *there is but one Mediator of God and men* [1], Jesus, the Head of the Church.

(3) *Confiteántur Tibi pópuli Deus : confiteántur Tibi pópuli omnes.* *Let the people praise Thee, O God : yea, let all the people praise Thee.*

Walk ye in the way together with all nations ; walk ye in the way together with all peoples, O children of peace, children of the one Catholic Church. Walk ye in the way, singing as ye go. Wayfarers do this to beguile their toil. Sing ye in the way, I implore you, by that same way, sing ye in this way. A new song, sing ye ; let no one there sing old songs ; sing ye the songs full of love for your fatherland ; let no one sing old songs. A new way, a new wayfarer, a new song. Thus St. Augustine.

(4) *Læténtur et exsúltent gentes : quoniam júdicas pópulos in æquitáte, et gentes in terra dirigís.* *O let the nations rejoice and be glad : for Thou shalt judge the folk righteously, and govern the nations upon the earth.*

They shall be glad, and shall not be in servile fear of the judgment, because it will be just and merciful instead of arbitrary and cruel ; moreover *Thou shalt govern* and guide the *nations* in the right way, so that they shall be safe from all peril, because taught by Thee to avoid sin.

(5) *Confiteántur Tibi pópuli Deus ; confiteántur pópuli omnes ; terra dedit Fructum suum.* *Let all the people praise Thee, O God : let all the people praise Thee. The earth hath brought forth its Fruit.*

There is a fresh reason, says the Carmelite, for the rejoicing of the people, and one more glorious and joyous than the former. For the earth is that holy soil of which it is written : *Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness ; let the earth open, and let it bring forth a Saviour* [2].

The earth hath brought forth its Fruit. Mary hath borne Jesus. Et homo factus Est.

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

[2] Is. xlv. 8.

(6) <i>Benedicat nos Deus, Deus noster, benedicat nos Deus : et metuant Eum omnes fines terræ.</i>	<i>May God, our God, bless us, may God bless us : and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.</i>
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The Carmelite points out that the mystery of the Blessed Trinity is shadowed out in the triple recitation of the Name of God—God the Father, Unbegotten, Underived, shall bless us : Our *own God*, God the Son, our Brother, made like us in all things save sin, shall bless us ; God, the Holy Ghost, shall bless us. And the singular verb in the Latin and the pronoun express the Unity.

All the ends of the earth shall fear Him. Not with the servile fear which the devils feel, but with the loving fear of sons, the wholesome reverence of disciples, that fear whereby we are saved from the wrath to come.

GLORIA PARTI.

Glory be to the Father Whom we seek early and Who sheds on us the Light of His Countenance. Glory to the Son Who watches for us to God and Who is our own God. Glory to the Holy Ghost Himself the Mercy in Judgment to be extolled above all life and Who is the Light of the Countenance of God.

FOURTH ANTIPHON.

<i>Benedicta filia tu a Dó- mino : quia per te Fructum vitæ comunicávimus.</i>	<i>O daughter, blessed art thou of the Lord, for through thee we have partaken of the Fruit of life.</i>
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Mary's glory and happiness in heaven is not for herself alone. The Mystical Body shares in all the good that befalls its members ; and as we share in the work our ever dear and blessed Lady did on earth in bringing forth the Fruit of Life, so does the Church at large share in the harvest home gathered by her means. She, being a divinely ordained channel of grace between Jesus and our souls, it is through her that the fruit of His salvation is brought home to us. She gave us

Jesus ; and in Him gave us all things. So we, too, share in her heavenly reward. Her glory is ours, we partake in the songs which resound through the heavens to her honour ; for she is the triumph of God's grace, the monument of His mercy and the model of what a creature can be. Therefore in the following Canticle let us call upon all Creation to lend us their voices to praise the Lord for all He has done for us by Mary, and for all He has done in Mary.

CANTICLE : *Benedicite*. [1]

Argument.

Denis the Carthusian. When Nebuchodonosor cast the three Hebrew children, Shadrach, Misach, Abdenago, into the fiery furnace, they *fell down bound into the midst of the burning fiery furnace, and they walked in the midst of the fire praising God and blessing the Lord. . . . But the angel of the Lord came down into the furnace. . . . and made in the midst of the furnace as it had been a moist cooling wind, so that the fire touched them not at all, neither burnt nor troubled them. Then the three as out of one mouth praised, glorified and blessed God in the furnace, saying. . . . Then Nebuchodonosor, the king, was astonished and rose up in haste and spake and said unto his counsellors : Did we not cast three men bound into the midst of the fire ? They answered and said unto the king : True O king. He answered and said : Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire and they have no hurt, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God* [2]. The *Benedicite* is taken from their song, and calls upon all creatures, animate and inanimate, to bless the Lord. We may distinguish in this Canticle three divisions after the introductory verse. First of all, heavenly creatures and the forces of Nature ; then the earth and brute creation ; and lastly, man. In the life of St. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi, it is related that this servant of God is said to have asked her Divine Spouse what glory could such exhortations to creatures without reason give Him. "When these words are said with fervour," was the reply, "and from

[1] This Canticle is taken from Daniel, with certain additions of ecclesiastical origin.

[2] Dan. iii. 23-92.

the depths of the heart, these creatures are called upon to bless Me, I take it as though they really did so, and the praise of him who thus invokes them I take as equalling them all" [1].

One special subject of blessing God we must have when reciting this Canticle of Praise, and that is, our ever dear and blessed Lady. We can never thank God enough for all He has done for her and for us in her and through her. While we call upon Creation to join with us in praising God for Mary, we will ask her, after the Sacred Humanity of our Lord, the greatest of God's works, to praise Him for us and sing her *Magnificat* for the great things He hath done for her.

(1) <i>Benedicite ómnia ópera</i>	<i>All ye works of the Lord,</i>
<i>Dómini Domino : laudate et</i>	<i>bless ye the Lord : praise and</i>
<i>superexaltate Eum in sæcula.</i>	<i>exalt Him for ever.</i>

All ye works. Creatures not by voice only, but by work, praise God ; for by their fulfilling the end for which they were created, and being in themselves *very good* [2], they show forth the greatness of God, and by them we can rise to the knowledge of God, as Solomon says in the Book of Wisdom : *For by the greatness and beauty of the creatures proportionably the Maker of them is seen* [3] ; and St. Paul : *For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead* [4]. But creatures gifted with intelligence, such as angels and men, can bless God with mind as well as by their work. Again, *the works of the Lord* may be taken in two senses, says the Carthusian : The natural *works* of the creature, in which God takes a necessary part as sustainer, according to the words of Moses : *The hand of the Lord hath wrought all these things* [5]. And secondly, of the *works* of grace which we indeed do, but which God goes before and accompanies according to the saying of Isaias : *All our works Thou hast wrought in us* [6].

But as blessing seems to be the action of a superior to the inferior, St. Paul saying : *Without any contradiction that which*

[1] Life, by F. Cepari, *Act. Sanct.*, 25.

[2] Gen. i. 31.

[3] xiii. 5.

[4] Rom. i. 20.

[5] Deut. xxxii. 27.

[6] xxvi. 12.

is less is blessed by the greater [1]; how can the creature be called upon to bless the Creator? To this the Carthusian answers that there are two kinds of blessing; one of consecration, of which St. Gregory says, God's blessing is a bestowal of gifts, and a multiplying thereof, hence in His name the Church blesses; the other blessing is a giving of thanks, or a praising, as Holy Simeon blessed God for showing him his Salvation [2]; and as David, who said: *I will bless the Lord at all times* [3]. It is in this sense that creation is called upon to bless the Lord. *Praise*, because the power of God is shown in them; *exalt*, because the Creator is shown to be so much greater than His works.

(2) <i>Benedicite Angeli Dómini Dómino : benedicite cæli Dómino.</i>	<i>O angels of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : O heavens, bless ye the Lord.</i>
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The Angels are invited, not that they need an invitation, or that they ever cease from blessing, praising, and exalting God; but these are words congratulating them for what they do, and joining ourselves to their ceaseless song. It is also an invitation to make a special thanksgiving for us.

Angels of the Lord. The word *angels*, as the pseudo-Areopagite observes, sometimes means the lowest choir and sometimes, as here, the whole angelic creation. They are all *messengers*, even the highest; for, says the Apostle: *Are they not all ministering spirits?* [4].

Heavens, are, according to St. Augustine, holy souls, according to the words of the Prophet: *Heaven is my seat* [5]; for God abides in the hearts of His faithful.

(3) <i>Benedicite aquæ omnes, quæ super cælos sunt, Dómino : benedicite omnes virtutes Dómini Dómino.</i>	<i>O waters which are above the earth, bless ye the Lord : all ye powers of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.</i>
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Origen understands by these *waters*, spiritual substances, and Albert the Great, the First Matter from which the world was evolved: *And the Spirit of God moved over the face of*

[1] Heb. vii. 7.

[2] Cf. ii. 28.

[3] Ps. xxxiii. 1.

[4] Heb. i. 14

[5] Is. lxvi. 1.

the waters [1]; or, it is to be understood in a mystical sense of the illuminated minds of God's saints, in which Divine operations are seen, as in a pool of clear water.

Powers of the Lord. Some take these to mean those angels God uses to direct the motions of the material world; for they say that angels direct the wind, the rain, snow, heat, and govern the sun, and moon, and solar system, being thus used by God to carry out the laws He has laid upon Nature. Others of all created *powers* which God has in any way given to creatures to enable them to fulfil His Will. We may also see in this especially the *powers* of grace and those great, powerful operations of the precious Blood, the seven Sacraments. Fr. Eudes, that saintly master of Prayer, who had so many heavenly lights, used to take these words literally as the *virtues* of the Lord, the supernatural *virtues* which adorned the Human Soul of Jesus.

(4) *Benedicite sol et luna*
Dómino : benedicite stellæ cæli
Dómino.

O sun and moon, bless ye the
Lord : O stars of heaven, bless
ye the Lord.

The sun may be taken for the most pure womb of our Lady, according to the words : *In the sun hath He placed His dwelling-place* [2]. *The moon* also of her ; inasmuch as all her grace, all her beauty, and all her power is derived from the Sun of Righteousness Himself. *The stars* also refer to her ; they are her virtues in the good odour of which we run. The three together are the adornment of that Great Sign set in the heavens : *A woman clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet, and a crown of twelve stars above her head* [3]. Thus does the wise man describe *the two great lights which God made* [4] : *The sun when he appeareth, declaring at his rising a marvellous instrument, the work of the Most High : at noon he parcheth the country, and who can abide the burning heat thereof? . . . breathing out fury, vapours, and sending forth bright beams that dimmeth the eyes. Great is the Lord that made it ; and at His command it runneth hastily : He made the moon also to serve in her season for a declaration of times and a sign of the world*

[1] Gen. i. 2.

[2] Ps. xviii. 6.

[3] Apoc. xii. 1.

[4] Gen. i. 16.

. . . being an instrument of the armies above, shining in the firmament of heaven. The beauty of heaven, the glory of the stars, an ornament giving light in the highest places of the Lord, at the commandment of the Holy One they will stand in judgment and never fail in their watches [1]. In the mystical sense the *sun* signifies the understanding of good and evil and the splendour of reason. The *moon*, the lower powers of the soul, which are directed by the reason. The *stars of heaven* signify the virtuous who, endowed with wisdom, by word and example, as the simple sons of God [2], shine amidst the darkness of the world. Of whom Daniel says : *They who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever and ever* [3]. Once more, the *sun* may be taken of eternal life, the *moon* of the changeable and passing world, and the *stars* of our own small life.

(5) *Benedicite omnis imber,
et ros Dómino : benedicite
omnes spíritus Dei Dómino.*

*All ye showers and dew,
bless ye the Lord : all ye spírits
of God, bless ye the Lord.*

Showers moisten the ground and cause the seed to swell and germinate, as the Prophet says : *The rain cometh and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it to bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater* [4]. The Carthusian suggests that by *showers* we can understand doctrine and preaching, which sink into the mind like rain on a dry land ; and by *dew*, the consolation and unction of the Holy Ghost, which comes from within.

Spirits of God here mean the winds, which continue the work which showers and dew begin ; or, again, by *spirits* we may understand the Spirit of God Himself Who fans into a flame His fire within our hearts, at the same time cooling the earthly fire which rages there.

(6) *Benedicite ignis, et æstus
Dómino : benedicte frigus, et
æstus Dómino.*

*O fire and heat, bless ye
the Lord : O cold and heat,
bless ye the Lord.*

St. Thomas says *fire* is a very apt image of God, for,

[1] Eccles. xliii. 2-11.

[2] Phil. ii. 15.

[3] xii. 3.

[4] Is. lv. 10.

according to the Apostle : *He is a consuming fire* [1]. The Holy Ghost is called in the *Veni Creator* a "fire." Now heat is the effect of fire, and so the two are joined together. Mystically, *fire* is charity ; *heat* is the fervour thereof, concerning which Christ said : *I have come to cast fire on the earth* [2] ; and the two disciples said : *Was not our heart burning within us ?* [3]. This Divine *fire* and spiritual *heat* are the choicest gifts of God, and therefore fitting for our most humble thanksgiving.

O cold and heat. Cold is here taken for wintry season, and *heat* for the summer days. Mystically, says the Carthusian, *cold* is the extinction of the flames of lust and vice ; *heat*, for the warmth and ripening of virtues : the elect bless God both for the withdrawal of evil and for the increase of good. Then we can *bless the Lord at all time* [4], in all the changes of the seasons ; for in all we see His power and wisdom and providence for His creatures.

(7) *Benedicite rores, et pru-
ina Dómino : benedicite gelu,
et frigus Dómino.*

*O dews and hoar frosts,
bless ye the Lord : O frost and
cold, bless ye the Lord.*

Dew is an effect of tempered heat and is most abundant in the Spring, when the new plants need sustenance. *Hoar frosts* are an effect of *cold* and are prevalent in Autumn, and check the growth, so says the Philosopher. The first signifies prosperity, the other adversity : *If*, says the holy Job, *we receive good things from God, why shall we not bear evil ?* [5]. We may also take them, one for grace which helps on our spiritual growth, and the other for temptation which proves our work. Thus are *we armed with the arms of justice on the right hand and on the left* [6].

Frost and cold. Frost is caused by *cold*, according to the words of Ecclesiasticus : *When the north wind bloweth, and the water is congealed into ice, it abideth upon every gathering together of water and clothed the water as with a breast-plate* [7]. And that of the Psalmist : *Before the face of His cold who can*

[1] Heb. xii. 29.

[2] Luke xii. 49.

[3] *Ibid.* xxiv. 32.

[4] Ps. xxxiii. 1.

[5] ii. 10.

[6] 2 Cor. vi. 7.

[7] xliii. 22.

abide? [1] By *frost and cold* we may understand the binding and hardening of the mind by the withdrawal or suspension of sensible devotion ; in which circumstances we must still bless God, and patiently possess our souls in peace, while praying for the return of the gift. We must refuse to look for consolation in exterior and unworthy pursuits, according to the words of the Psalmist : *I remembered the Lord and was glad : I was exercised and my spirit failed* [2].

(8) <i>Benedicite glâcies, et nives Dómino: benedicite noct- es, et dies Dómino.</i>	<i>Ice and snow, bless ye the Lord : nights and days, bless ye the Lord.</i>
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Some consider that by *ice*, hail is to be understood. These creatures of God : *Fire, hail, ice, and spirits of the storm which fulfil His Word*, hereby show forth His power and glory. *Hail* was used with His wonderful dealing with the Jews ; for instance, the plague of hail [3] ; and the destruction of the Amorites by hailstones in the days of Josue [4] : *Fire, mingled with the hail, ran along the ground* [5]. So the Carthusian takes these two as the scourges of God, for which we ought to bless Him.

Nights and days signify, respectively, tribulation and prosperity ; or *night*, the obscurity of the Old Testament and the darkness of sin ; *day*, the brightness of the Gospel and the illumination of grace.

(9) <i>Benedicite lux, et tene- bræ Dómino: benedicite fúl- gura, et nubes Dómino.</i>	<i>O Light and Darkness, bless ye the Lord ; O lightnings and clouds, bless ye the Lord.</i>
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Light, the first work of God in making the world, of which Solomon says : *Sweet is the light, and pleasing to the eye is it to see the sun* [6], is mystically taken to signify the illumination of the soul, the good cheering thereof by the in-dwelling of the Holy Ghost and the gift of sensible piety ; whereas *darkness* is the defect, or ignorance, or obscuring of the heart, whether it comes by sin, or by the mystical privation of sensible devotion sent for the purifying of our souls, according to the saying :

[1] clxvii. 17.

[2] lxxvi. 4.

[3] Exod. ix. 23.

[4] x. 11.

[5] Exod. ix. 23.

[6] Eccles. xi. 7.

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind . . . where is the way where Light dwelleth ? and as for darkness, where is the place thereof ? [1] In this verse *light* and *darkness* must be taken as the qualities of the *days* and *nights* of the preceding verse.

Lightnings, which flash in the clouds, are spiritually to be understood of the brilliancy of miracles or the terrible threats of God's judgments, which from time to time flash out from the clouds which veil Him from our sight. As we read in the Psalm : *Thy lightnings shone over all the earth ; the earth was moved and shook withal* [2]. Concerning *clouds* many things are said in the book of Job to show God's greatness : *Can any understand the spreading of the clouds or the noise of His tabernacle ?* [3] It was a *cloud* that sheltered by day the Israelites in the desert, and was a guide to them by night [4]. *Clouds*, also, are represented as overshadowing His dwelling-place, according to that word of the Psalmist : *Clouds and darkness are round about Him* [5].

(10) *Benedicat terra Dóminum : laudet et superexáltet Eum in sæcula.*

Let the earth bless the earth : let it praise and exalt Him for ever.

How the earth tells us of God ! He Himself says : *Where was thou when I laid the foundations of the earth ? Declare if thou hast understanding. Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest ? or who hath stretched the line upon it ? Where-upon are the foundations thereof fastened ? or who laid the corner-stone thereof* [6]. The *earth*, by its stability and its fruitfulness, is an image of the man whose mind is stayed on God and who bringeth forth his fruits in due season. St. Gregory the Great says : It is wonderful that man is not always engaged in praising God ; for creation ever invites him to do so.

(11) *Benedicite montes, et colles Dómino : benedicite universa germinantia in terra Dómino.*

O mountains and hills, bless ye the Lord : everything that springeth on the earth, bless ye the Lord.

[1] Job xxxviii. 1, 19.

[2] lxxvi. 19.

[3] xxxvi. 29.

[4] Cf. Ex. xiii. 21.

[5] Ps. xcvi. 2.

[6] Job xxxviii. 4-6.

God hath prepared the mountains in His power [1] and girts the hills with joy of the harvest, so that they sing a hymn of harvest-thanksgiving to Him [2]. Albert the Great notes that in the mystical sense *mountains and hills* are the prelates of Holy Church, or those shining with the gifts of grace, according to that saying of the Prophet : *The mountains shall distil sweetness, and the hills shall flow with milk* [3].

Everything that springeth on the earth, all the treasures earth has in minerals, precious stones, plants, trees, flowers, &c. And how very beautiful is this fair earth that was made as a dwelling-place for the Incarnate God ! Our Lord points out its beauty : *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow . . . I say to you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed as one of these* [4]. The verse may also be taken to refer to every good action we do. The seed whereof was planted by God in our heart ; He watered it by grace ; the sun of His favour gave it the increase and ripened the fruit. It is all His doing, and sets out His infinite perfections. Our part is only to work with Him and to obey His inspirations. To Him be all honour and glory ! *Not unto us O Lord, not unto us* [5].

(12) *Benedicite fontes Dómino : benedicite mária, et flúmina Dómino.*

O fountains, bless ye the Lord : O seas and waves, bless ye the Lord.

A *fountain*, the source of waters, by its exuberance, its clearness and its diffusion, is an image of Divine goodness ; hence God is often called in Holy Writ a *fountain*. It is also applied to the Wounds of our blessed Saviour ; for they were the *fountains* of grace and mercy for all the world, according to that saying of the Prophet : *Ye shall draw water in joy from the fountains of the Saviour* [6].

O seas and rivers. By the *seas* is sometimes meant the tempest-tossed world, full of bitterness, as in Isaías, *the wicked as the boiling sea, which cannot be still* [7] ; others take it as the heart of penitents troubled by waves of sorrow and compunc-

[1] Ps. lxiv. 6.

[2] *Ibid.* 14.

[3] Joel iii. 18.

[4] Matt. vi. 28, 29.

[5] Ps. cxiii. 9.

[6] Is. xii. 3.

[7] *Ibid.* lvii. 20.

tion: *Great as the sea is thy sorrow* [1]. Rivers, on the other hand, denote sometimes the abundant gifts of grace, and sometimes overwhelming tribulations. In the first sense our Lord uses the words when He says: *He who believeth in Me . . . out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water* [2]. But the second sense is implied by the Psalmist when he says: *The rivers have lifted up their floods from the voices of many waters* [3].

(13) *Benedicite cete, et ómnia, quæ movéntur in aquis, Dómino: benedicite omnes volucres cæli Dómino.*

O whales and all that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord: O birds of heaven, bless ye the Lord.

Fish and birds were one of the special creations of God, the work of the fifth day. Our Divine Master said to SS. Peter and Andrew: *I will make you fishers of men* [4], likening men to fish. If we work out the analogy we shall see it amply justified. As the fish live and move in the water, so do all Christians live their supernatural life in the waters of Baptism; then, from the Divine immanence or pervading of all things, we are living in God; He is all round about us, on every side, through and through, as water is round a fish swimming therein. It was for reasons like this, to express the union between the Humanity and the Godhead, yet withal their distinction, that the Fish figures in the oldest Christian art as the image of Christ; besides, as we have explained, the hidden meaning in the letters of the Greek word for fish, *ἰχθῦς*, i.e., Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour.

Birds of the heaven, that is, of the air. Sometimes by *birds* the proud who lift themselves upon high, or devils, *the princes of the Power of the air* [5] are meant; as when our Lord says: *The birds of the air eat it*, that is, the good seed [6]. But here the word is to be taken, in mystical sense, for contemplative souls who on the wings of prayer are lifted up towards the sublime things of God. These are they who can say: *Who will give me the wings of a dove and I will fly away and be at*

[1] Lam. ii. 13.

[2] John vii. 38.

[3] Ps. xcii. 3, 4.

[4] Matt. iv. 19.

[5] Eph. ii. 2.

[6] Luke viii. 5.

rest? [1]. Of these doves the Prophet speaks when he asks : *Who are these that fly as the clouds and as doves at their windows?* [2]: And again : *They who trust in the Lord shall renew their strength ; they shall take unto themselves wings, like the eagle ; they shall run and not be weary ; they shall walk and not faint* " [3].

(14) *Benedicite omnes béstia et pécora Dómino : benedicite filii hóminum Dómino.*

All beasts and cattle, bless ye the Lord : ye sons of men, bless ye the Lord.

Besides the obvious sense of the verse, the Carthusian says : By *beasts and cattle* we may understand men immersed in lust ; and these are invited to return to their reason, and bless God Who has spared them so long and still calls them to repentance. But there is a difference between the two : *beasts* are the untamed, *cattle* the domesticated animals ; and so we may understand by the former, carnal men who are cruel and intractable ; by the latter, carnal men who nevertheless are mild and easily led.

Sons of men. Now leaving the brute creation and those who, abandoning their reason, live like brutes, only by instinct, we come to the true *sons of men*, as made by God ; and thus the circle of being is completed. We started from the angels, pure spirits ; we have passed through the animate and inanimate creation, and now we come to Man, *made a little lower than the angels*, partly spirit, partly material, summing up in himself all creation ; a "little world," as the ancient philosophers called him.

(15) *Benedicat Israel Dóminus : laudet et superexáltet Eum in sæcula.*

May Israel bless the Lord : may he praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

Israel, "Prince of God," or the "chosen people," is specially invited to bless the Lord. Who is Israel? *Israel is Mine inheritance*, says God by His Prophet [4]. Those He has specially chosen and has called to that intimate union which makes them *princes* ; those to whom He has given the gracious

[1] Ps. liv. 7.

[2] Isaias lx. 8.

[3] *Ibid.* xl. 31

[4] Is. xix. 25.

call : *Come after me* [1] ; and to whom He says : *I no longer call you servants but friends . . . for you have not chosen Me but I have chosen you* [2]. We, whom in various ways He has called, are invited in this verse, not only to *bless* Him, but to *praise* Him and to *exalt Him above all for ever* ; that is, to be grateful to Him, to extol His mercy in choosing us, and to set Him above all the desires of our hearts : *One thing only have I asked of the Lord ; that I may dwell for ever in His courts* [3].

(16) <i>Benedicite sacerdotes</i>	<i>O priests of the Lord, bless</i>
<i>Dómini Dómino : benedicite</i>	<i>ye the Lord : O servants of the</i>
<i>servi Dómini Domino.</i>	<i>Lord, bless ye the Lord.</i>

Priests of the Lord. They are called upon specially to bless the Lord, because they have a means of doing so far above any means which angels or other men have ; for, sharing in the Eternal Priesthood of the great High Priest Himself, they can offer the most perfect act of Thanksgiving to God that He can desire. The Mass is the Eucharistic sacrifice, *i.e.*, the offering of Thanksgiving. Therefore it is fitting that in this verse we unite ourselves to all the Masses that have ever been said and that are being said at this very moment throughout the world, and offer them to bless the Lord through and by and with Jesus Christ, Himself the Priest and the Victim thereof. But in a wider sense we are all priests, as St. Peter tells us : *Ye also . . . are an holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*" [4] ; for not only do we share in every Mass that is said, and offer it (*Pray, brethren, that my and your sacrifice may be acceptable to Almighty God*, says the priest), but we also are called to offer the spiritual sacrifice of our will, of our whole being to God by Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body. How many of God's children have thus, as spiritual priests, sacrificed themselves as living victims to His Honour, slaying themselves with the two-edged sword of Poverty and Chastity, and burning themselves on the fire of the Altar of Obedience. These spiritual *priests* are then to bless the Lord for making their sacrifice *acceptable* in His sight. They are in a special

[1] Matt. iv. 19.

[2] John xv. 15, 16.

[3] Ps. xxvi. 4.

[4] 1 Pet. ii. 5.

way the servants of the Lord; for they know and, to the best of their ability, carry out His will.

(17) <i>Benedicite spiritus et animæ justorum Dómino : benedicite sancti, et húmiles corde Dómino.</i>	<i>O spirits and souls of the righteous, bless ye the Lord : O holy and lowly of heart, bless ye the Lord.</i>
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We now go to the Church suffering in Purgatory, to those spirits and souls of the righteous not yet made perfect who are there, and invite them to join in the Canticle of praise. *A hymn befits thee, O Lord, in Sion* [1], in that holy abode of purification; for these souls all are of the Ransomed, are all safe, and have all fought the good fight. If their full blessedness is not yet complete, if they are still in the shade and not in the light, they are safe and they know their salvation is sealed. They have their hymn of deliverance upon their lips: *When Israel out of Egypt came and the house of Jacob from amongst a barbarous people* [2]. They are on the verge of the Promised Land; and they know they are sure of entry. How deep, then, are their songs of blessing and thanking God, deep even in the midst of their purgation, deep even because of it; for is it not His mercy which gives them this means of purifying themselves before they enter in?

O holy and lowly of heart. And now we go on to all the choir of ransomed souls standing ever before the Throne, that great multitude of our brethren which no man can number, and among whom one day we, too, by God's grace, shall stand. They are the *holy*, and because holy, they are glorified and great. But their very greatness makes them realise that it is all God's gift, and is due to the merits of Jesus Christ, their Divine Head. So in the midst of their majesty and triumph they are *lowly* in heart, and ever join in our Lady's song: *He hath done great things to me* [3]. To their songs of blessing we join ours, and ask the blessed in heaven to praise God on our behalf and be mindful of their brethren here below, still fighting, as they once fought, still striving after the crown which they have secured.

Some have taken the clause in another way. *O Spirit and*

[1] Ps. lxiv. 1.

[2] *Ibid.* cxiii. 1.

[3] Luke i. 49.

souls of the just, meaning thereby the Holy Ghost Who has worked righteousness in the souls of the just. This is according to St. Basil's saying : What is man made of ? Body and soul. But what is a Christian made of ? Body and soul, and the Holy Ghost.

(18) *Benedicite Anania, Azaria, Misael, Dómino : laudáte et superexaltáte eum in sæcula.*

Ananias, Azarias and Misael, bless ye the Lord : praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

These words, by which the Holy Children animated each other to praise the Lord Who had so marvellously preserved them from the fiery furnace, we may look upon as a call from our companions, from all who are charged with the offering of the Prayer, to fervour and recollection in the discharge of this heavenly duty. We have to deal with the high things of God and to approach the Altar of incense whereon lies the fire ; we have to enter into that fiery furnace, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, and to become penetrated with His sentiments and intentions ; yet, says the Prophet, *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings ?* [1] May God send His angels with a cooling wind to still the earthly flames of distractions, and help us to plead before the fires of the eternal Throne.

(19) *Benedicámus Patrem et Fílium cum sancto Spíritu : laudémus, et superexaltémus Eum in sæcula.*

Let us bless the Father and Son together with the Holy Ghost : Let us praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

This verse was added by the Church. It is like the *Gloria Patri*, in place of which it is recited. All the preceding verses have lead up to this. The *Lord* we have been calling on all to bless is He Who is Three in One, the Creator, the Redeemer, the Sanctifier. We may note that after the enumeration of the three Divine Persons the one Nature is expressed by the *Him*.

(20) *Benedíctus es Dómine firmaménto cæli : et laudábilis, et gloriósus, et superexaltátus in sæcula.*

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the Firmament of the heavens, and praiseworthy, glorious, and exalted above all for ever.

This [1] sounds like the response of all creation to our incessant invitation. Heaven and earth are full of the Song of Praise, and this is the form it takes. *Praiseworthy*, on account of Thy goodness, power, and holiness ; *and glorious* in all ways, infinitely so and exalted above all ; for Thou art the Creator and we are but the work of Thy hands *for ever*. For Thou wilt never cease to be God and we shall never cease to do the objects of Thy bounty and loving kindness. This is, then, the end of the Canticles. *All the works of the Lord* join in blessing His Name and acknowledging that He is their Lord and God.

FIFTH ANTIPHON.

*Pulchra es et decóra filia
Jerúsalem : terribilis ut castró-
rum ácies ordináta.*

*Fair and comely art thou,
O daughter of Jerusalem :
terrible as an army set in battle
array.*

In this Antiphon we consider both the beauty of our ever dear and blessed Lady and her power over the Evil one. They both crush his head, for they are the result of grace. He sees in her its power and what a creature can be by being faithful to God. The thought of what he has lost by his infidelity makes *enmity* between them. But clad in the armour of Faith, with the helmet of Righteousness, and the breast-plate of Truth, together with the sword of the Spirit, our Lady is ever ready to meet his attacks when he besets her children. So she reigns as Queen not only of heaven, but of earth also ; and in the midst of her joys, for which we praise God, she does not forget her children here below, but prays *for us now and at the hour of our death*, that as she has done so may we also accomplish our end by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Title.—Alleluia.*Argument* [1].

Tomasi : That all things were made and created by the command of Christ. The voice of the Apostles to the people inviting all to the praise of the Creator.

Venerable Bede : The Prophet urges all creatures to the praises of the Lord ; the rational and intellectual ones in person ; those which lack instinct or senses through the means of those which join in praising the Lord with the wisest use of thought [2].

(1) *Laudate Dóminum de
cælis : laudáte Eum in excelsis.*

*Praise the Lord from the
heavens : praise Him in the
heights.*

(2) *Laudáte Eum omnes
Angeli Ejus : laudáte Eum
omnes virtutes Ejus.*

*Praise Him all ye His an-
gels : praise Him all ye His
powers.*

This is a song of hope fulfilled, of liberty granted, of rest given. And therefore most fitly those very sons of God, the Angel hosts, are invited to begin the song *from the heavens*, and that from no lowly station therein, but *in the heights*, where Cherubim and Seraphim stand nearest to the Throne. They are to begin the Song of the New Creation ; for Man, though rejoicing in the message of Redemption, knows not how to praise as he ought, and therefore needs a voice to give the intonation to this Psalm. It is thus not a commandment, but a petition, that the Angels may continue what they always are doing ; so that Man may catch the strain, as the priest sings in the Preface of the Mass : “ And therefore with the angels.”

[1] This Psalm is always said together with the two following, under one *Gloria* and Antiphon ; and the custom is explained by Durandus as the triple battle cry against the world, the flesh and the devil ; the joint anthem of Jews Christians, and Gentiles ; the praise of the Trinity in Unity. The name of the office of Lauds is derived from the word so frequently repeated, *Laudate*.

[2] A recent writer styles this Psalm “ The Voice of the Church Militant praising her Maker for the Resurrection.”

(3) *Laudáte Eum sol et luna : laudáte Eum omnes stellæ et lumen.* *Praise Him Sun and Moon : all ye Stars and Light praise Him.*

The Psalmist descends from the invisible and highest of creatures to those which, though far lower in dignity, are yet the highest and most glorious objects in the visible universe ; that what is greatest in light may praise Him first. *Light*, the primæval creation, is an emblem of God. *Light of Lights*, is one of the similies used in the Nicene Creed to express the Divine Nature of God the Son. St. Gregory the Great says : As Christ in His Manhood praises the Father, ascribing all glory to Him, that God may be all in all, so, too, the Church, that *moon* which derives all her *light* from Him and waxes and wanes in brightness here in the world, together with all those righteous children of His who shine as stars [1], praises Him in one hymn of thanksgiving. The *Light*, as something diverse from the orbs of brightness, also utter His laud, by typifying and disclosing Him. We may also take *light* as signifying *that light which enlighteneth everyone coming into this world* [2], the *light* of Reason, which is the *light* of the Countenance of God which He has signed upon us [3].

(4) *Laudáte Eum cæli cælorum : et aquæ omnes, quæ super cælos sunt, laudent nomen Dómini.* *Praise Him all ye heavens : and ye waters that are above the heavens, let them praise the Name of the Lord.*

All ye heavens, words, says St. Augustine, implying at once their vast extent and unsearchable height. The Carmelite takes these words of our Blessed Lady, who for nine months was the abode of God made Man : and *ye waters that are above the heavens* of the Divine contemplation of the doctrines of the Gospels and the Apostles. Origen and St. Ambrose understand these *waters* as purely spiritual symbols ; and Jorgius tells us they are the abundant grace of the Holy Ghost : *A pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb* [4]. They may also be

1] Dan. xii. 3.

[2] John i. 9.

[3] Cf. Ps. iv. 8.

[4] Apoc. xxii. 1.

taken of the *waters* of Baptism, which open the way to us through the gates of heaven and which take their rise in the pierced Side of Jesus. St. Peter Chrysologus tells us that the *waters* of penitential tears, the weeping of Mary Magdalen, are *above the heavens*, because they rise at once and directly into the very presence of God.

(5) <i>Quia Ipse dixit et facta sunt: Ipse mandávit et creáta sunt.</i>	<i>For He spoke the word and they were made: He commanded and they were created.</i>
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He spoke the Word when He said, before all Eternity: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee [1]. Thus says St. Augustine: *And they were made, for the Word was God and all things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made* [2].

He commanded. Our Lord Himself says: *The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into His Hands* [3]. So St. Paul draws out the doctrine that: *Therefore by Him were all things created that are in heaven and in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him and in Him* [4]. And as the Carmelite together with the Carthusian says: In that He not only *made* but *created* them, His divine origin, power, as well as His plastic and artistic wisdom, are implied. And also the whole sentence shows the instantaneous result of the Divine *Fiat*; for *God calleth these things which are not as though they were* [5].

(6) <i>Státuit ea in ætérnum et in sæculum sæculi: præcéptum pósuit et non præteríbit.</i>	<i>He hath made them fast for ever and ever; He hath given them a law which shall not be broken.</i>
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Each created thing is not only formed to endure, in the type or the development, if not in the individual, but also has its place in the universe fixed by God's decree, that it may fulfil its appointed share of working out His Will. This is so even in the spiritual life. We have every one of us a state of

[1] Ps. ii. 7.

[2] John i. 1, 3.

[3] John iii. 35.

[4] Col. i. 16.

[5] Rom. iv. 17.

perfection to which God calls us, and towards which all His graces are directed; for instance, it is idle for a Sister of Mercy to sigh after that kind of perfection which is part of the vocation of a Poor Clare. *To each one His Gift* [1]. God's will is for us to be perfect in our own vocation; and it is to this end that we must direct all our efforts.

The *Law*, which He hath given to all heavenly things, to the Angels, to that bright and glorious City whence we are exiled pilgrims, is that of everlasting praise, their one task where there are no sins to struggle against, no wants to minister to. Thus St. Augustine.

(7) <i>Laudáte Dóminum de</i>	<i>Praise the Lord from the</i>
<i>terra : dracones et omnes</i>	<i>earth, ye dragons and all</i>
<i>abyssi.</i>	<i>depths.</i>

We begin with the lowest part of creation. Some of the mediæval commentators dwell on the words, *dragons and all depths*, to teach us that even the *great red dragon* [2] and all his brood in deepest hell are forced, however reluctantly, to praise the Lord by working out His ends when striving to do their own evil will. That devout anchoress, Mother Juliana of Norwich, says of the Evil one: All that God suffereth him to do turneth us to joy and him to shame and pain. And he hath as much sorrow when God giveth him leave to work as when he worketh not; and that is, for he may never do as ill as he would, for his might is all locked in God's hand [3].

Hugh of St. Victor, who explains this, as well as the succeeding verses, of various orders of saints, thinks great eminence to be signified by the size of the *dragons*, and profound wisdom in the *depths* where they lie; and he gives as examples of his meaning such names as Abraham, Isaias, SS. Peter, John, Stephen and Nicholas.

(8) <i>Ignis, grando, nix,</i>	<i>Fire, hail, snow, and ice :</i>
<i>glácies, spiritus procellarum :</i>	<i>ye spirits of the storms who</i>
<i>quæ faciunt verbum Ejus.</i>	<i>fulfil His Word.</i>

Bellarmino points out that this enumeration teaches two lessons: that these are all agents of good, not of evil, in the

[1] Cf. 1 Cor. vii. 7.

[2] Apoc. xii. 3.

[3] P. 48.

world, and that they are all under the absolute control of God. Some commentators take these words as representing various kinds of sinners : *Fire*, men of burning passions ; *hail*, which crushes the grain, the persecutors ; *snow*, those cold in sin ; *ice*, frozen in unbelief ; *spirits of the storms*, still fiercer persecutors ; yet all *fulfilling His word*. But Hugh of St. Victor takes these words in quite the opposite sense. With him *fire* denotes souls fervent and glowing with charity ; *hail*, great preachers who pour down storm and lasting rebukes on sinners ; *snow*, those white in purity ; *ice*, such as by mortification check whatever in them is too lax or flaccid ; and all these, in their several ranks in the Church, cheerfully doing God's will. Nor is there any real difference between the two views ; for the opposition only denotes the various results of these very same qualities when under the guidance of God or when left to self-will.

(9) *Montes et omnes colles :
ligna fructifera et omnes cedri.*

*Mountains and all hills,
fruitful trees and all cedars ;*

(10) *Béstiæ et universa pécora:*
serpentes et volucres pennatæ.

*Beasts and all cattle ;
creeping things and feathered
fowls.*

Following Hugh of St. Victor, *mountains* are saints eminent in holiness; *hills*, those who bring forth good works, especially by teaching others; *cedars*, those incorrupt in mortification and excelling in contemplation; *wild beasts*, those called to practise solitude; *cattle*, such as live together in the common life; *creeping things*, such who quietly and steadily occupy themselves in the active life; *feathered fowl*, such as rise on high in heavenly contemplations.

(II) *Reges terræ et omnes
pópuli: principes et omnes júdices
terræ.*

*Kings of the earth and
all people: princes and all
judges of the earth ;*

(12) *Juvenes et virgines, senes
cum junioribus laudent Nomen
Domini: quia exaltatum est
Nomen Ejus solius.*

*Young men and maidens,
old men and children, praise
the Name of the Lord : for
His Name is alone exalted.*

Here, at last, says the seraphic doctor, St. Bonaventure, is the direct appeal to Man, as the highest of earthly beings, to take his part in the great anthem of praise.

Kings and princes, that is, all superiors, praise God, says Albert the Great, when they rule for the good of the people ; *judges*, when they decide with justice all cases that come before them. And there is great force in the words, *all people*, inasmuch as the worship of the true God is not confined within the limits of a single nation, but spreads all over the world.

Young men are those who *are strong* and in whom *the Word of the Lord abideth*, and *have overcome the wicked one* [1]. *Maidens*, all those who in chastity serve God, even if they be among the wedded ; but above all, such as are nearer to Him by the Religious life ; while all others are included under the remaining head. Then comes the reason ; no longer, as in the fifth verse, the constraining force of an Eternal Law, too strong to be broken, that suffices for inanimate creations ; but Man must have his reason convinced, and his will moved before he submits.

His Name alone is exalted. That *Name*, says Gerovius, of Jesus, Who only is holy, Who only is the Lord, Who only is most high, with the Holy Ghost in the glory of God the Father : *Who has a Name which is above every other name before which every knee must bow* [2].

(13) *Confessio Ejus super cælum et terram : et exaltavit cornu populi Sui.*

His praise is above heaven and earth : and He hath lifted up the horn of His people.

His praise is above all created things ; for no creature, not even our ever dear and blessed Lady, can praise God as His Majesty demands. Only Infinity can worthily praise God ; hence Jesus, the Word Incarnate, is the Adorer, the Praiser of His Father. We join with Him in that eternal act of Praise which is ever going up in the Mass and the Office, and in every prayer which the Holy Ghost inspires.

He hath lifted up the horn of His people, that is, the power. First, by the Incarnation, next by the Passion, then by the

[1] 1 John ii. 14.

[2] Phil. ii. 9.

Resurrection and Ascension, and lastly by the dignity and glory He bestows upon all who live His life and follow His law.

(14) *Hymnus omnibus sanctis
Ejus : filiis Israel, pópulo appropinquánti Sibi.*

*A hymn for all His saints :
even the children of Israel,
a people that draweth nigh
to Him.*

What is a *hymn*, asked St. Augustine. A song with praise of God. If you praise God and do not sing it is not a hymn ; yea, rather, if you sing and do not praise God it is not a hymn you utter ; if you sing and praise something which is not God, song and praise together do not make you utter a hymn. A hymn, then, has these three properties : song, praise, and all directed to God. So this *hymn* is for all the *children* of the true spiritual *Israel*, even the *people that draweth nigh to Him*. The Carthusian says : It is truly said *near* ; for the world to come as well as for this one, since it would be easier to annihilate heaven and earth than that any man who takes delight in God's praises should not be saved. What is then the *hymn* peculiar to these saints ? What but that very *Alleluia* which is the title and close of this Psalm.

" This is the strain, the eternal strain, the Lord of all things loves :
Alleluia.

This is the song, the heavenly song, that Christ Himself approves :
Alleluia." [1]

PSALM CXLIX. [2]

Title.—Alleluia.

Argument.

Tomasi : That the praise of Christ should be celebrated in all churches. The voice of Christ to the faithful concerning the Resurrection, Judgment to come, promising rest to them who suffer for His Name, and power over all that afflict them.

Venerable Bede : The Psalmist says that a *New Song* should

[1] *Gotteschalkus.*

[2] A writer styles this Psalm " The New Song of the Church Suffering, those royal souls like kings bound in chains, like nobles laden with links of iron."

be sung to Christ the Lord, Who in divers ways, of His loving kindness, hath built up a universal Jerusalem out of the whole world. In the foregoing psalm he urged all creatures to the praises of the Lord ; here he hath furthermore plainly and specially signified that Israel ought to sing a New song, and be joyful in its own Lord Who caused it to be gathered together out of the multitude of the Gentiles. And mention is made of the power which is to be given to the saints in that Judgment, that the might of the Lord may be acknowledged in their glory.

(1) *Cantate Dómino cánticum novum : laus Ejus in ecclésia sanctórum.*

O sing unto the Lord a new song : let His praise be in the Church of the Saints.

No one that hath not *put off the old man with his works* [1] shall sing the *new song* ; nay, it is, moreover, necessary to *put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of Him that created him* [2] in order to be able to sing it. And a *new song*, looked at historically, is a glorious and especial chant, sung in honour of some success and victory ; but in the allegorical sense it is a Canticle of the New Testament. For then all things were made new ; a new creation, a new man, a new life, new commandments, new grace, new promises, new sacraments, new precepts. The *old man* has an old song, the *new man* a new one. The old song is the Old Testament, the *new song* the New Testament. In the Old Testament, the promises are temporal and earthly : whoso, then, loveth temporal things sings the old songs ; but he who desires to sing the *new song* must love things eternal. And this *song* is of peace and charity. It cannot be sung apart from the *Church of the saints*, from the united Canticle of *all the whole earth* [3]. He who sings not in this wise, let him sing what he will, he does not sing the *new song*. With his tongue he may utter *Alleluia* all day and all night ; yet it is not the voice of the singer but the conduct of the doer which has to be noted. I ask and say, what art thou singing ? And one answers *Alleluia*. What does *Alleluia* mean ? “ Praise ye

[1] Col. iii. 9.

[2] *Ibid.* 10.

[3] Ps. xcv. 1.

the Lord," or "O come, let us praise the Lord together." If thou art praising the Lord and I am praising the Lord, why are we at discord? Charity praiseth the Lord, discord blasphemeth Him. Thus St. Augustine.

His praise is in the Church of the saints. In the Catholic Church, not in the congregations of those outside the Unity, far less in the assemblies of the wicked; for of Sion it is written: *Foy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody* [1]. To the souls in Purgatory it is a *new song*, the first echoes of which they caught at the Judgment Seat when Christ was gracious to them.

In that *Church of the Saints*—Purgatory—God's *praise* is unceasing; for their salvation is secured; and when the Red Sea of suffering is passed and they join the Triumphant Church of the Saints, the *New Song*, begun in Purgatory, will go on for ever, swelling with more and more rapture. It is truly a *new song* the blessed sing; for the matter of it never grows old, the delight of it never grows weary; for that delight is always fresh in love, and ever fresh in practice. *Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and to-day and for evermore* [2]. It is truly *new*, because it renews men's minds with eternal blessedness. And so we read: *Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old: Behold I will do a new thing* [3]. Says St. Bonaventure: Sing not therefore with Lucifer, who began with a loud voice an anthem in heaven, saying: *I will ascend unto heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will be like the Most High* [4]; a voice beginning in pride, then going on to suggestion, and ending in a cry of despair. Sing not with Adam's three dissonant tones of credulity, consent, and excuse; but sit down at the feet of the New Man and learn of Him to begin from the lowest note. He says: *Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart* [5].

(2) *Lætétur Israel in Eo qui fecit eum: et filii Sion exsultent in Rege suo.*

Let Israel rejoice in Him that made him: and let the children of Sion be joyful in their King.

[1] Is. li. 3.

[2] Heb. xiii. 8.

[3] Is. xliii. 18.

[4] *Ibid.* xiv. 14.

[5] Matt. xi. 29.

All those Israelites, indeed, in whom there is no guile, are bidden to rejoice; for God is worshipped chiefly by faith, hope and charity; and the companions and fruits of these are righteousness, peace and joy.

While all *Israel*, God's *chosen people*, rejoice in their Maker, it is the special privilege of the *children of Sion*, the saints of the Church Militant, especially such as are striving after perfection in the way of the Counsels, to be *joyful in their King*, their Anointed Priest and Sovereign. For He bears to them a special relation which He does not to any other beings in creation. Wherefore Holy Church saith: *But, am I by Him appointed King upon His holy hill of Sion* [1]. Yes, adds Cassiodorus, they shall indeed be joyful when they see Him, the Almighty, Him the Bestower of everlasting rewards, Whose future coming in majesty they have believed. What bounds will there be to that joy of beholding the Lord of all things, Whom we believe to have died for the salvation of all? We cannot know the measure of that gladness; but we know it will surpass all understanding; for the Truth hath promised it. Once more *Israel*, the Chosen princes of God, now reigning in bliss, the future companions of the souls in Purgatory, or they themselves exiled as Jacob was from his father's home.

Children of Sion. Those who are united together by charity and the assistance of prayer; for they should be *joyful to their King* in giving Him back the souls in Purgatory.

(3) *Laudent Nomen Ejus*
in choro: in tympano et psal-
tério psallant Ei.

Let them praise His Name
in the choir: let them sing
praises unto Him with timbrel
and harp.

Choir is a figure of the Unity of the Faith; and St. Ambrose alleges that the introduction of choirs into the Christian Church was not so much for musical effect as for the purpose of symbolising concord of mind. Psalmody, says he, unites those who were at variance, makes friends of opponents, reconciles the offended. Who could help forgiving a man with whom he has been uttering the same praise to God?

With timbrel and harp. The *timbrel* or tambourine, consisting of a skin stretched tightly upon a frame of wood, is a type of crucifixion to the world, and of bodily mortification; for this skin is that of a dead animal. On the other hand, the *harp*, with its ten strings, resembles the timbrel, in so far as immediate agent of sound (the strings) is strained to the wooden framework. It also denotes active compliance with the Ten Commandments of the Moral Law.

(4) <i>Quia beneplácitum est</i>	<i>The Lord is well pleased</i>
<i>Dómino in pópulo Suo: et</i>	<i>with His people: and exalteth</i>
<i>exaltábit mansuétos in salú-</i>	<i>the meek unto salvation.</i>
<i>tem.</i>	

The Lord is well pleased with His people. In those who submit to His law, not with the subjects of the prince of this world.

He exalteth the meek unto salvation, raising them to His Own right hand in the Judgment. The literal meaning is, *He shall beautify the meek unto salvation*, that is, not only in the sense of giving costly riches and precious gems instead of the torn, soiled and dishevelled garb of sorrow, as the Prophet says: *To appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness* [1]; but in giving them, as St. Jerome says, the Pearl of great Price for their ornament.

(5) <i>Exsultábunt sancti in</i>	<i>Let the saints be joyful in</i>
<i>glória: lætabúntur in cubilibus</i>	<i>glory: let them rejoice in their</i>
<i>suis.</i>	<i>beds.</i>

The saints rejoice even in Purgatory *in their beds*, in the peaceful secrecy of divine contemplation, in their heart and conscience, as knowing *the night is far spent and the day is at hand* [2], and as being secure and at peace under the wings of God, as it is written: *I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely* [3]. Even here on earth those who seek God's will and whose minds are set on Him rejoice in the security of His love, and their joy no man can take from them.

And lastly, the majority of commentators take the words of

[1] Is. lxi. 3.

[2] Rom. xiii. 12.

[3] Osee ii. 18.

the final consummation of bliss in the many mansions of the kingdom of heaven, where the saints rest from their labours.

(6) *Exaltatiões Dei in
gitture eorum : et gládii ancti-
pites in mánibus eorum.*

*Let the high praises of God
be in their mouth, and two-
edged swords in their hands.*

These *high praises*, according to St. John Chrysostom, are the *two-edged swords*, which in the hands of the saints do more to discomfort their foes than any worldly prowess. And the *praises of God* set on our lips by Holy Church in Public Prayer are taken for the most part out of Holy Scripture, which St. Paul speaks of as *sharper than any two-edged sword* [1]. Dwelling on this view of the *two-edged sword*, St. Augustine draws out its meaning as smiting out of the Old and New Testament ; having temporal promises and consolations in one edge and eternal ones in the other. This *sword* draws men from their nearest and dearest when their ties become incompatible with duty towards God ; and while thus severing, yet consoles him who has courage to cut boldly with it even if he smites off his own right hand. And this *sword* of the Word is said to be in their *hands*, not their mouths, because of the vigour and effect with which they use it. Then, again, it may be taken of the pains the souls in Purgatory have to undergo ; for the *two-edged swords* serve for the *dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discoverer of the thoughts and intents of the heart* [2]. It is in *their hands*, for it is their own faults for which they make expiation. It is they who desire to go for a while from the Face of Him in Whose sight they know they are not pure, as St. Catherine of Genoa teaches. But while thus by their own hands they suffer they never lose the *high praises of God* in their *mouth*. And again, the words can be taken of that share of the saints in the judicial power of Him out of Whose mouth goes a *sharp two-edged sword* [3] to smite the sinner and *cut him asunder and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites* [4].

[1] Heb. iv. 12.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Apoc. i. 16.

[4] Matt. xxiv. 51.

Wherefore follows :—

(7) *Ad faciendam vindictam in nationibus : increpationes in pópulis.*

To be avenged of the nations : and to rebuke the people.

(8) *Ad alligandos reges eórum in compédibus : et nóbiles eórum in mánicis férreis.*

To bind their kings in chains : and their nobles with links of iron.

Now, says St. Augustine, we have seen the saints armed ; let us watch the slaughter, watch the glorious battle. If Christ is our general, then we also are soldiers. This implies we have an enemy, and there is warfare and a victory behind. What have Christ and His soldiers done with the *two-edged sword* in their hands ? Used it *to be avenged of the nations*, by extinguishing paganism and breaking down the idols.

To rebuke the people. Let that two-edged sword of rebuke go forth of you ; cease not, God has given it to you. When the sinner begins to feel ashamed, when he suffers the prick of conscience, the sword has made a wound, it reaches his heart. He dies that he may live.

To bind their kings in chains, and their nobles with links of iron. Christ came for the good of all ; but He chose that the Emperor of Rome, the type of the world, should be benefited by the Fisherman, not the Fisherman by an Emperor. So He chose things of no weight in the world ; He filled them with the Holy Ghost ; He gave them two-edged swords ; He taught them to preach the Gospel to the whole world. It raged, the Lion lifted himself up against the Lamb, but the Lamb proved sharper than the Lion. The Lion was conquered by his own fury ; the Lamb conquered by suffering. Why *links of iron* ? As long as fear rules the heart, those conquered by the sword of God are bound in chains of iron ; but let Love gain the mastery, and then the Law, which pressed so heavily upon us, becomes changed into the sweet Law of Liberty, whose links are of gold. Looking at these verses in another way, we see the light which Purgatory gives us upon the unutterable holiness of God. The manifestation of the vengeance exacted for sin is God's rebuke to Christians for their carelessness. Those who have been looked up to as great in position, learning,

authority, and what not, may be nothing in God's sight but sinners; and if dying so, will be bound in chains and links of iron and cast into the darkness outside the light of heaven, until the last farthing of their debt is paid. Lastly, these verses are taken of the sentence the saints shall assist in passing at the Last Judgment on those who, of their own freewill, remain in their wickedness.

(9) *Ut fácient in eis judi-* *To execute on them the judg-*
cium conscriptum : glória hæc *ment written : such glory is to*
est ómnibus sanctis Ejus. *all His saints.*

Judgment written, that is pre-ordained, fixed, unalterable, foreseen as the result of our free will. So God spoke by the prophet : *Behold it is written before Me : I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom* [1].

Such glory is to all His saints. Because the judicial power of Christ is not shared with the Apostles only, but with all the righteous, as it is written : *They shall purge the nations and have dominion over the people : and the Lord shall reign for ever* [2]. So is it with the saints throughout the world; so they deal in every nation; so they exalt God in their mouths; so they rejoice in their beds; so they are beautified with salvation; so they sing the *new song*; so they say with heart, voice and life, *Alleluia*. Thus St. Augustine.

PSALM CL. [3]

Title.—Alleluia.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ is to be praised in all His saints by spiritual harmony. The voice of Christ after overcoming the world, comforting them that rejoice in His Kingdom. Christ sheweth praise in all. The Prophet urgeth posterity, as well as the living, to be instant in the duty of holy song. The voice of Christ rejoicing in His Kingdom. This last psalm

[1] Is. lxxv. 6.

[2] Wis. iii. 8.

[3] The same writer says of this psalm : "It is the Song of the Church Triumphant when the number of the elect is made up, that is, when the soldier is crowned with victory and the exiled brought home."

has, on account of the Ten Commandments, *Praise ye* said ten times ; and, because of the four Gospels, four things are mentioned, to wit : saints, the firmament, noble acts, and multitude. Finally, there are eight kinds of musical instruments mentioned ; because on the octave day of the first day Christ rose again, and taught us the resurrection of the dead, when every spirit, that is, Man made spiritual, shall praise the Lord.

Venerable Bede : The City of God is counselled that being gathered out of the compass of the world, it should sing praises to Lord with voice and mind. This psalm, lifted up to that harmonious country of all saints, ought not to have any division, because it hath brought the end of the whole with the might of the indivisible Trinity.

(1) <i>Laudate Dóminum in sanctis Ejus : laudate Eum in firmaménto Ejus.</i>	<i>O praise God in His saints : O praise Him in the firmament of His power.</i>
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Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost ; and a pure soul is the truest sanctuary of the Lord, in which stands His spiritual Altar. *How much more are they so when glorified in heaven, when corruptible has put on incorruption and mortality has put on immortality ?* [1]. In praising His saints we are praising their Lord ; for all their holiness consists in imitating Him, and their power to do so is His grace.

The firmament of His power is His Sacred Death, by which He overcame the power of the evil one, and established His Church, against which the gates of hell shall never prevail.

(2) <i>Laudáte Eum in virtútibus Ejus : laudáte Eum secundum multitudínem magnitúdinis Ejus.</i>	<i>O praise Him in His noble deeds : Praise Him according to the multitude of His greatness.</i>
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Says Bellarmine : God is to be praised, not merely because He dwells in heaven, but because He dwells there as Almighty Ruler and Lord of all. And, says St. Bruno, we are here bidden to praise God for every great deed of His holiness or power wrought by His saints ; and the more eminent such

appears the more bound are we to refer it to the Unseen Worker by and in Whose Name they were all done. When the saints in glory look back and see how His mercy hath followed them all the days of their life [1], and how He hath done great things in them, their praise becomes more ardent and more intense. Or, translating the words literally, *in His virtues* we may take them as meaning that the saints, wrapt in adoration of Jesus, are ravished at the glory of the virtues of the Sacred Humanity of Whose fulness they have all received, and therefore praise God for the humility of Jesus, for the charity of Jesus, for the zeal of Jesus, for the patience of Jesus, and for His other virtues.

According to the multitude of His greatness. How can we do this? St. Gregory the Great tells us: We most truly give in full the acts of the Divine power when we know ourselves unable to give them fully. We speak most eloquently when we are silent in amazement at them. When our feebleness tries to recount the works of God, the way to use the tongue is to praise by adequate silence what we are not able adequately to comprehend. He praises God according to the multitude of His greatness who feels that he utterly breaks down in an effort at fulfilling His praise.

(3) *Laudáte Eum in sono tubæ: laudáte Eum in psalterio, et cithara.*

O praise Him in the sound of the trumpet: praise Him upon the lute and the harp.

The *trumpet* is the war-like instrument and calls to battle or proclaims victory. Hence the trumpet praises Christ as He is our Captain and King. The *trumpet* represents also preachers and teachers, as it is written: *Cry aloud and spare not: lift up thy voice as a trumpet* [2]. The *trumpet* must be held with the hand; and so the preacher must do, as well as speak. Its mouthpiece is smaller than the bell from which the sound issues; so the preacher ought to be far stricter with himself than with his hearers. The *trumpet* is also the call of the Last Judgment, when the praise of God will be manifested to all the world.

[1] *Ct. Ps. xxii. 6.*

[2] *Is. lviii. 1.*

The *lute*, or psaltery, which was used in religious music, denotes service to God ; and as it sounds from above, denotes the glorification of the soul.

The *harp* used at weddings and other festivals, praises Christ, the Bridegroom, and summons us to His Marriage Feast. Sounding from below, it praises Him for deliverance from sorrow and rejoices in the glorification of the body.

(4) <i>Laudáte Eum in tym-</i>	<i>Praise Him with timbrel</i>
<i>pano et choro : laudáte Eum</i>	<i>and choir : praise Him with</i>
<i>in chordis et órgano.</i>	<i>strings and pipe.</i>

Timbrels, strained to the wood on every side, dry, and sounding with blows, serve as a type of the Martyrs and of all who are crucified to the world, uttering praise to God, most clearly when most severely afflicted.

Choir, denoting peaceful fellowship and harmonious action, which, St. Gregory reminds us, cannot be safely disregarded by those who play the timbrel of mortification.

Strings, thin and strained with great tension, are types of those who macerate the body with fasts and vigils and are tightly fastened by the nails of the Cross, straining upwards to God and giving forth sweet tones when touched by His fingers.

The *pipe*, or hand-organ, formed of several tubes of unequal lengths fastened together, signifies the Common Life, or the harmonious concord of different graces and virtues united by the bond of charity.

(5) <i>Laudáte Eum in cym-</i>	<i>O praise Him with well-</i>
<i>balis benesonántibus ; laudáte</i>	<i>tuned cymbals : praise Him</i>
<i>Eum in cymbalis jubilationis :</i>	<i>with loud cymbals : let every</i>
<i>omnis spíritus laudet Dómi-</i>	<i>spirit praise the Lord.</i>
<i>num.</i>	

Cymbals are always used in praise. They may fitly denote those who consider one another, *to provoke to love and good works* [1]. They are *well-tuned* from the holiness of their deeds and words in accordance with the Divine will ; *loud*, in their clear boldness and in their full rejoicing. The two Testaments

[1] Heb. x. 24.

are *well-tuned cymbals* ; so also are the heart and lips of a saint in prayer. And when the two great choirs of angels and men shall join together, blending in concord and filling heaven and and earth with melody, then shall God be praised with loud cymbals. .

Lest anything should be lacking, lest the understanding should fail to accompany the voice, the Psalmist ends his great song with the words : *Let every spirit praise the Lord*. St. Augustine thus interprets these words : Those who live the true life of the soul, who are spiritual, are here chiefly called on to praise the Lord, and to praise Him not here alone, where the *timbrel* and *strings* tell of mortification and suffering, and the *cymbals* of the need of mutual aid, but in the full glory of heaven, when the flesh, now incorruptible, and the spirit are agreed, and the song of one is that of both.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, Who spake the word, Who is the Maker of Israel, and Who abides in the firmament of His power : Glory to the Son, the Word by Whom all things are made, the King of the Children of Sion, Who by His virtues hath wrought the salvation of mankind : Glory to the Holy Ghost, Who came forth as a stormy wind to fulfil the Word to the Apostles, Who giveth honour unto His saints, and in Whose might every spirit saith, *Alleluia*.

THE LITTLE CHAPTER.

“A chapter is as much as to say as a ‘lytel head’ ; it is called ‘little’ for shortness. And it is called a ‘head,’ for it is always taken of Holy Scripture and often of the Epistle that is read in the Mass the same day. And Holy Scripture is chief above all other scriptures, as the head is above all other members of the body. And the Chapters are read at other hours instead of lessons in the way of doctrine and teaching as lessons are at Matins. And therefore, in other hours after the Chapter followeth a response with a verse, which meaneth the same as doth the lessons and response and verse at Matins. But the Chapter is not begun with *Jube Dómine*,

nor ended with *Tu autem*, because it is always said by the hebdomadary who occupieth an office of perfection, to whom it belongeth rather to give blessing than to ask it in that office. And by the same way it is presumed that she should not lightly offend in so short a reading that she should need to ask mercy with *Tu autem*. But ye all answer *Deo grátias*, as ye do after another Lesson; and for the same cause as is said before, after the first Lesson at Matins" [1].

CANTICLE VI. 9.

*Viderunt eam filix Sion, et
beatissimam prædicavérunt :
reginx laudavérunt eam.*

*The daughters of Sion saw
her and call her most blessed :
the queens, and they praised
her.*

R. Deo Grátias.

Thanks be to God.

The daughters. These are the *daughters of Jerusalem* who celebrate the beauty of the King's spouse. In heaven it is a never-failing joy to the angels to see our ever dear and blessed Lady's glory and to acknowledge her as their queen; on earth, it is a never-failing example to the daughters of the Church who, seeing her virtues, call her *most blessed* and follow in her footsteps: the *queens* are those *kings' daughters* spoken of in Psalm xliv., and represent these same holy *daughters* who have followed Mary to the end and share in her eternal reward. They are *queens* because they have exercised on earth a regal sway over themselves by Poverty, Chastity and Obedience; they are *queens* because they are spouses of the Great King and dwell for ever in His courts. It was Mary's example that gave them heart to follow their Divine Master along the mystic way of self-sacrifice; it was Mary's love that cherished them in the dark hour and who got from her Son the wine of charity which kept them strong. Therefore, never will they cease to praise her who has been the channel of God's mercies towards them; for her love was only a showing of the love of Jesus for all mankind.

It is worth noting how the spirit of praise which is peculiar

[1] *Myroure*, p. 127.

to this office of Lauds is kept up in the Little Chapter. We have the two words "bless" and "praise" repeated here. Bearing in mind that the mystery of this hour is that of the Assumption, the words of this Little Chapter describe to us the sentiments of heavenly citizens, when Mary, body and soul, was assumed into heaven. They saw her and blessed her; and their highest even bowed down and acknowledged her as their mistress; for she was the Mother of the King. In union with them, and thanking God for all His mercies towards her, we say the *Deo Grátias*.

THE HYMN.

The hymn carries on the same thoughts: the glory Mary has received, and the praise of God. Like the hymn at Matins, it is the composition of the Bishop Venantius Fortunatus. St. Anthony of Padua had a special devotion to this hymn and died with it on his lips.

(1) <i>O Gloriosa Virginum, Sublímis inter sidera, Qui te creávit párvulum, Lacténte nutris úbere.</i>	<i>O Queen of all the Virgin Choirs, Enthroned above the starry sky, Who with thy bosom's milk didst feed Thine own Creator, Lord most High.</i>
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Our Lady is the most *glorious of all the virgins* whom she has *led after her to the King* [1]; inasmuch as she joins to her crown of Virginity that peerless diadem of Motherhood. The Virgin-Mother is fittingly raised up above *the stars*, which surround her as a crown [2]. *These stars* are the saints; St. Paul says: *There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars: for one star differeth from another star in glory* [3]; that is, there is the glory of Jesus, the glory of Mary, and the glory of the Saints—each one a very world of beauty and magnificence. And amid all her glory Jesus, Who made her, never forgets that to her He owes not only His mortal existence but all that wealth of love that such a Mother had for such a Son. This human thought,

[1] Ps. xliv. 16.

[2] Apoc. xii. 1.

[3] 1 Cor. xv. 41

mixed up with the glory of heaven, gives us confidence in Mary's power; for she is still the Mother of the King. Solomon, a type of our Lord, promised to grant his mother's request: *And the king rose up to meet her and bowed himself unto her, and sat down on his throne and caused a seat to be set for the king's mother, and she sat on his right hand. Then she said, I desire one small petition of thee; I pray thee say me not nay. And the king said unto her: Ask on, my mother, for I will not say thee nay [1].*

(2) <i>Quod Heva tristis abstulit,</i>	<i>What man had lost in hapless</i>
	<i>Eve</i>
<i>Tu reddis almo gérmine:</i>	<i>Thy sacred womb to man</i>
	<i>restores:</i>
<i>Intrent ut astra flébiles,</i>	<i>Thou to the wretched here</i>
	<i>below</i>
<i>Cæli recludis cárdines.</i>	<i>Hast opened Heaven's eternal</i>
	<i>doors.</i>

Heva tristis. The sorrowful Eve is here contrasted with the joyful Mother, Mary. As Jesus is the second Adam, the true Head of our Race, so is Mary the second Eve, the real *mother of all the living*. If Eve, by tempting Adam, took away our right to heaven, Mary restored it by giving us Jesus. If Eve brought sorrow by listening to the serpent, Mary brought joy by listening to the angel. If Eve is the mother of our Race according to Nature, Mary is the mother of mankind according to Grace.

Cardines. Mary is the hinge on which hangs the door of heaven; for on her consent turned the mystery of the Incarnation.

Ut astra flébiles. Those who have been weeping for their fall, return now like the stars in their glory, according to the words of the Psalm: *Those who sow in tears shall reap in joy. Going they went and wept, casting their seed; but coming they came with joy, bearing their sheaves [2].*

[1] 3 Kings ii. 19, 20.

[2] cxxv. 5, 6, 7.

(3) <i>Tu Regis alti jánua,</i>	<i>Hail O refulgent Hall of</i>
	<i>Light,</i>
<i>Et aula lucis fúlgida :</i>	<i>Hail Gate august of Heaven's</i>
	<i>high King :</i>
<i>Vitam datam per Virginem,</i>	<i>Through Thee redeemed to end-</i>
	<i>less Life,</i>
<i>Gentes redémp̄tæ, pláudite !</i>	<i>Thy praise let all the nations</i>
	<i>sing.</i>

Jánua. One of the invocations of the Litany of Loreto is *Janua cæli*—"gate of heaven." There is a difference between a "gate" and a "door." The "door" is the opening to the house itself; the "gate" is the entrance to the garden in which the house stands. Our Divine Lord is Himself the "Door" of the Eternal Mansions: *I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture* [1]. But Mary is the *gate* by which we have access to the door of the King's Palace. And in another sense, of her maiden-motherhood, she is the "closed gate," of which Ezekiel, in prophecy, says: *The gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut* [2].

Aula lucis: Her sacred womb was for nine months the place of Him Who said: *I am the Light of the world: He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life* [3].

Vitam datam per Virginem. The life given by the Virgin. What Life is this? Not only the mortal *Life* of our Saviour, but also the *life* of our souls, which we get from Him through her. Also our vocation, her special care, which is that manifestation of the *life of Jesus* [4] which comes from *bearing about in our bodies His dying* by the immolation of religious profession.

The doxology of the hymn, *Jesu, tibi sit glória*, is the same as at Matins, and is now said in thanksgiving to the Adorable Trinity in thanksgiving for Mary's glory in heaven.

[1] John x. 9.

[2] xlv. 2.

[3] John viii. 12.

[4] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

VERSICLE AND RESPONSE AND ANTIPHON.

V. Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

Blessed art thou among women.

R. Et benedictus Fructus ventris tui.

And blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.

The same strain of praise is carried on and leads us to the culminating point of the office, the Gospel Canticle. We have been thinking of the glory of Mary, and praising God for it. We are now about again to approach directly the throne of God Himself. Just before we do so, as by a last effort to remind us of the Divine Maternity of her under whose patronage we approach the seat of Mercy, the Versicle and Response which commemorate it are put upon our lips to increase our fervour. It is this same thought which inspires the Antiphon before the Canticle itself :—

Beáta Dei Génitrix Maria, Virgo perpétua, templum Dómini, sacrárium Spíritus sancti : sola sine exemplo placuisti Domino nostro Jesu Christo : ora pro pópulo, intérvieni pro clero, intercède pro devóto femíneo sexu.

O blessed Mother of God, Mary, ever maiden, temple of the Lord, Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost : thou alone, unexampled, hath pleased our Lord Jesus Christ : Pray for the people ; beseech for the clergy ; intercede for the devout female sex.

Sacrárium Spíritus sancti—Sanctuary of the Holy Ghost. As the Third Person is the Sanctifier and dwells in the souls of those who are united by charity to God, so in a true way is He the Sanctifier of our blessed Lady and makes her soul a very special sanctuary. Spiritual writers speak of three great sanctifications of our Lady, three special outpourings of the Holy Ghost. The first, when He sanctified her by preventing grace at the moment of her existence, the hallowing of the Immaculate Conception ; then when, by overshadowing grace, He poured out the fulness thereof at the moment of the Incarnation ; and lastly, amidst the fires of Pentecost, when that unutterable hallowing of the holy took place, and by creative grace Mary was made the Mother of the Church : once for herself, once for Jesus, and once for us.

THE BENEDICTUS [1].

"Ye have in your service three Gospels, that is, *Benedictus* and *Magnificat* and *Nunc Dimittis*, and all three are sung standing for reverence of the Gospel. Zachary, the father of St. John Baptist, made *Benedictus*, and our Lady made *Magnificat*, and the holy man, Simeon, made *Nunc Dimittis*. These songs are not sung in the same order as they were made; for *Magnificat* was made first, then *Benedictus*, and last, *Nunc Dimittis*. But *Benedictus* is sung first, for it maketh mind of St. John Baptist who was the foregoer of our Lord, Jesus Christ, as it is said in the same song. And as St. John was likened to the day-star, for as that goeth before the sun, so St. John went before our Lord in his conception, and in his birth, and in his preaching and baptising, and in his death; therefore this song is sung at Lauds, that is, the service of morrow-tide when the star appeareth; and also for this song beginneth with praising and thanking God for the redemption of mankind, and Lauds are said to praise God specially for the same benefit . . . therefore it is convenient that it be sung at Lauds" [2].

M. Bacquez, in his treatise on the Divine Office, says that this Canticle, the *new song* of Psalm cxlix., is the stepping-stone between the Old Law and the New; from the promise to the fulfilment, from the figure to the reality. It was sung by one of the last of the priests of the order of Aaron, the first of that race who, having knowledge of our Lord's coming, proclaims in a moment of exaltation the vocation of this new-born son as the Foregoer of the Messias.

In order to understand the meaning of this Canticle it will be well to recall the Gospel history as given by St. Luke, and in passing we may draw attention to the fact that St. Luke is the Liturgical Evangelist, and to him we owe the three Gospel Canticles. This holy Evangelist, the friend of our ever dear and blessed Lady, to whom she confided the mysteries of the Annunciation, of the Visitation, of the Nativity, of the Presentation, of the Loss and Finding, and of the Hidden Life

[1] Luke i. 68-79.

[2] *Myroure*, p. 131.

at Nazareth, shall tell us the circumstances under which this Canticle was first said :—

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias of the course of Abia : and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. They were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless. And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren ; and they were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass that while he executed the priestly office before God in the order of his course, according to the custom of the office of the priesthood, it was his turn to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

But the angel said unto him : Fear not, Zacharias ; for thy prayer is heard ; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness, and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. He shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just : to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias said unto the angel ; Whereby shall I know this ? For I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

And the angel answered and said unto him ; I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God, and am sent to speak unto thee, and show thee these glad tidings. And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak until the day that these things shall be performed ; because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

And the people waited for Zacharias and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple. And when he came out, he could not speak unto them : and they perceived that he had seen a

vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless. And it came to pass that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house. . . . [1].

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judea: and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost. . . . [2].

Now Elizabeth's full time came that she should be delivered: and she brought forth a son. And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had showed great mercy upon her, and they rejoiced with her.

And it came to pass that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father. And his mother answered and said, Not so: but he shall be called John. And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name. And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called. And he asked for a writing tablet, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

And his mouth was opened immediately and his tongue loosed, and he spake and praised God. . . . [3].

And his father, Zacharias, was filled with the Holy Ghost and prophesied, saying [4]:

(1) *Benedictus Dóminus
Deus Israel, quia visitávit et
fecit redemptionem plebis Suæ:*

*Blessed be the Lord God of
Israel: for He hath visited and
wrought the redemption of His
people:*

(2) *Et eréxit cornu salutis
nobis: in domo David púeri
Sui.*

*And hath raised up a horn
of salvation for us in the house
of His servant David.*

It was the God of Israel, that is, of Jacob, who was the heir of the promises made to Isaac and to Abraham: *In thy seed shall all nations of the earth be blessed* [5], Whom the holy man blessed. For it was the promised Redeemer

[1] Luke i. 5-23.

[2] *Ibid.* 39-41.

[3] *Ibid.* 57-64.

[4] *Ibid.* 67.

[5] Gen. xxii. 18.

Who—although yet in Mary's womb—now *visited* him and began the work of redemption by hallowing the unborn babe that had gladdened his old age. It was the infusion of the Holy Ghost that made Zacharias recognise his God in Mary's child; even as it was that same Divine impulse which caused his wife, three months before, to greet her as the *mother of my Lord* [1]. It was this Divine light, too, which made the old man speak of the *redemption* of God's people as something not future but already accomplished. A *horn* is taken as a symbol of power, and *the horn of salvation* as the agent or author of salvation. "A horn," says the author of the *Myroure*, "groweth in the highest part of a beast, and yet is harder than the flesh and softer than the bone; and therewith the beast defendeth himself against noxious things. So our Lord Jesus Christ took His Body of the highest and worthiest part of mankind, that is our Lady; and that Manhood of His is mightier above all mankind and weaker than God, and therewith not only He overcame His enemies, but they also that cleave thereto in faith and devotion may thereby surely be defended from all contrary power. And therefore our Lord Jesus is a *horn* of health to us in the *house of David* who was God's child, for though He was a great king and a prophet, yet He was meek and obedient to God as a child to his father" [2].

(3) *Sicut locutus est per os
sanctorum, qui a sæculo sunt
prophetarum Ejus.*

*As He spoke by the mouth
of His saints who, since the
world began, are His prophets.*

From the very hour of the Fall, the promise of the Redeemer was made: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed: she shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel* [3]. A long line of prophets was sent to God's people, mostly in the hour of affliction, to cheer them with the promise; and their message as the destined time drew near became more distinct and precise. Listen to Jeremias: *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a*

[1] Luke i. 43.

[2] pp. 131-2.

[3] Gen. iii. 15.

King shall reign and prosper and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. And in His days Judea shall be saved and Israel shall dwell safely : and this is the Name whereby He shall be called : The Lord, our Righteousness [1]. The earlier prophecies of Jacob had specified the tribe of Judah from whom the Sceptre should go forth and the Law-giver [2]. Balaam had seen Him in vision : *A Star out of Jacob and a Sceptre rising out of Israel* [3]. Moses had announced Him as a Teacher and Law-giver of Whom he was but a type [4]. To David's line had the promise been confined : *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, He will not deceive ; of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne* [5], and he had sung of His Eternal Priesthood [6]. Isaias, the royal seer, foretold His miraculous birth : *Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel : God with us*, and had described Him as *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief* [7]. Michias had foretold His birthplace : *But thou, Bethlehem Ephrata, though thou be little among the thousands of Judea, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me He that is to be the Ruler in Israel ; Whose goings forth have been from of old from everlasting* [8]. Aggeus had proclaimed that *the Desired of all nations should come* and make the second Temple more glorious than the first [9] ; and Daniel, *the man of desires*, had fixed the time by the prophecy of the seventy weeks [10]. Truly hath God at sundry times and in divers manners spoken in times past unto the fathers by the prophets [11]. In this verse is to be noted that there is but one *mouth* to all His prophets ; for they all spoke by the Holy Ghost. The one word they spoke was—

(4) *Salutem ex inimicis nostris, et de manu omnium, qui odérunt nos.*

Salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all that hate us.

[1] Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.

[2] Cf. Gen. xlix. 10.

[3] Numbers xxiv. 17.

[4] Deut. xviii. 15.

[5] Ps. cxxxi. 11.

[6] Ps. cix. 5.

[7] vii. 14 ; liii. 3.

[8] v. 2.

[9] ii. 7.

[10] Cf. ix. 25-27.

[11] Heb. i. 1.

(5) *Ad faciendam misericórdiam cum pátribus nostris : et memorári testaménti Sui sancti.*

To perform the Mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember His holy covenant.

God loved us, the work of His hand : *I have loved thee with an everlasting love* [1]. That is why He took pity on us in our fall and promised us Redemption and pledged Himself over and over again *to perform the Mercy* of restoring us, and *to remember His holy covenant* that *He should be our God and we His people* [2]. And to whom was this covenant made ? The answer is in the next verses.

(6) *Fusjurandum, quod jurávit ad Abraham patrem nostrum, datúrum Se nobis :*

The oath which He sware to Abraham our father, that He would give Himself to us :

(7) *Ut sine timóre de manu inimicórum nostrórum liberáti, serviámus Illi,*

That being delivered out of the hands of our enemies we might serve Him,

(8) *In sanctitáte, et justitia coram Ipso, ómnibus diébus nostris.*

In holiness and righteousness before Him all our days.

The oath was to Abraham, our father, for he was the *Father of the Faithful* [3]. It was conceived in these terms : *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* [4] ; in other words, that He should *give Himself to us* by becoming our *Emmanuel, that is, God with us* [5]. Says one of His prophets : *God Himself shall come to save us* [6] : and the reason of His coming is in verses 7 and 8.

Holiness is inward ; *righteousness* or justice has an outward signification. This correspondence of Body and Soul has to be real *before Him*, and has to be the rule of our whole life ; “not one day to begin well, another day to leave off ; but all days while we live” [7]. These words remind us of the claim of our vocation. We have bound ourselves to serve God all the days of our life in *holiness and righteousness before Him*.

[1] Jer. xxxi. 3.

[2] *Ibid.* xxx. 22.

[3] Gen. xvii. 5.

[4] Gen. xxii. 18.

[5] Is. vii. 14.

[6] Isaias xxxiii. 22.

[7] *Myroure*, p. 133.

(9) *Et tu puer, prophéta
Altissimi vocáberis : præibis
enim ante fáciem Dómini
paráre vias Ejus.*

*And thou, child, shalt be
called the prophet of the Most
High : for thou shalt go before
the face of the Lord to prepare
His ways.*

Turning his words now to his own son, the holy priest extols the vocation in store for him. John was to be the prophet and the foregoer, that is, he was to teach the people that the Messiah was come, and by his preachings and calls to repentance, to prepare the way for the Lamb of God. The thought of our vocation suggested in the last verse goes on through all these following verses : Every one, in the measure of God's appointment, is set to be a teacher of the things of God, and to prepare His way, not only in one's own soul, but in the souls of others. The great law of charity : *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself* [1] obliges us to this. But God has many ways of dealing with His creatures. There is not one hard, fast way ; for He has given us individuality, and we stand each singly before Him, not as a class. Therefore, true religion, while making us jealous for ourselves of the way in which God is calling us, makes us respect and rejoice over the many different ways in which He calls other souls. If we get narrow-minded and exclusive and set up our own way as the best (best it is for us), we may be sure there is something wrong in ourselves. Now how we are to prepare the ways of the Lord can be learnt from the rest of the Canticle.

(10) *Ad dandam sciéntiam
salútis plebi Ejus : in remis-
siónem peccatórum eórum :*

*To give to His people know-
ledge of salvation : for the
forgiveness of their sins.*

(11) *Per víscera misericór-
diæ Dei nostri : in quibus
visitávit nos Oriens ex alto.*

*Through the tender mercies
of our God, in which the Day
Spring from on high hath
visited us.*

The first step in preparing God's Way is to convince the Reason ; for that, in its practical aspect, is Conscience. Men must have a *knowledge* of the salvation prepared for them

before they value it. Hence the necessity of a Catholic education, and of an accurate understanding of the whys and wherefores of our Faith. God demands that we should serve Him with our reason, not by acting without reason. We have to submit it to Him; but not to annihilate it. This *knowledge of salvation* must be directed to its proper end; it is for *the forgiveness of their sins*, that is, the reason once convinced must strive after moving the will, in the perverseness of which sin consists. The motive to be used in thus influencing the will to conform itself to the Divine Will is that of *the tender mercies of God* which moved Him to become Man for our salvation. Hence from Knowledge comes Love, the mainspring of action. As the Spouse says: *He hath set charity in order within me* [1]. And this motive of influencing the will is in accord with the very nature of God Himself, which is Love: *God is Charity* [2]. As Love is the motive of all God's dealing with His creatures, so it must be ours in relation to Him.

The Day Spring from on high hath visited us. This may be taken either of our Lord Himself, Who is called in the Apocalypse the *bright and Morning Star* [3]; or of our ever dear and blessed Lady, the *Morning Star* that heralds in the rising Sun. She was probably present at the birth of John the Baptist, and she had come a bringer of blessings untold; for the Saviour of the world had already begun, through her, His work of Salvation.

(12) *Illuminâre his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent: ad dirigêndos pedes nostros in viam pacis.*

To lighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

The result of preparing the *ways* of the Lord is enlightenment and guidance. One is the perfection of the reason by the first four of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost; the second is the perfection of the will by the other three.

Sit in darkness; a habitual state due to dimness of the full light of reason, which in its turn is perfected by the more perfect light of faith.

[1] Cant. ii. 4.

[2] 1 John viii. 16.

[3] xxii. 16.

To guide our feet; not to force them, but by gentle persuasion to direct them.

The way of peace—that is, to the end that we may obtain perfect peace, the peace of God which passeth all understanding [1]; that peace we pray the Lamb of God to grant us, and which by His innermost mercy we shall obtain in the heavenly Jerusalem, the City which is the *beata pacis visio*—"the blest vision of peace" [2].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the Lord God of Israel Who hath been mindful of His promise. Glory to the Son, the Day Spring on high Who hath visited us and wrought the redemption of His people: Glory to the Holy Ghost, the Light-Giver Who spoke by the prophets, and works in us holiness and righteousness.

VERSICLES AND COLLECT.

Kyrie eléison.

Christe eléison.

Kyrie eléison.

*V. Dómine exáudi oratió-
nem meam.*

*R. Et clamor meus ad Te
véniat.*

Orémus.

*Deus, qui de beátæ Mariæ
Virginis utero Verbum Tuum,
Angelo nuntiánte, carnem sus-
cipere voluisti, præsta suppli-
cibus Tuis, ut qui vere eam
Genitricem Dei crédimus, ejus
apud Te intercessiónibus adju-
vémur. Per eúndem Christum
Dominum nostrum.*

R. Amen.

Lord have mercy.

Christ have mercy.

Lord have mercy.

O Lord, hear my prayer.

*And let my cry come unto
Thee.*

Let us pray.

*O God Who hast willed by
the message of the angel that
Thy Word shouldst take flesh in
the womb of the blessed Virgin
Mary, grant to Thy supplicants,
that we who believe her to be
verily the Mother of God may,
by her intercessions before Thee,
be helped. Through the same
Christ, our Lord.*

R. Amen.

[1] Phil. iv. 7.

[2] Hymn *Cælestis Urbs Jerusalem.*

The three-fold invocation to the blessed Trinity is called the smaller Litany and, together with the Lord's Prayer, formed in the early ages the conclusion of the Office. But in course of time the sentiments contained in the *Pater Noster* were developed into a prayer which more particularly harmonised with the special application of the Office. This prayer is called a *Collect*, that is, the prayer of the people collected in public worship, or a prayer in which the priest collects into one the petitions of all present. Most of the Collects in the Missal (from which these in the Office are taken) are the arrangements of St. Leo the Great (461), St. Gelasius (496), and St. Gregory (604).

The words of the preceding Versicle : *Dómine exáudi orationem meam*, are from the first verse of Psalm ci., and form a fitting introduction to the Collect. We say *Orémus* in the plural, even when reciting the Office by ourselves ; for we are saying the prayer in the name of the whole Church. We thus follow our Lord's injunction : *When ye pray, ye shall say, Our Father* [1]. In this Collect we give the Incarnation as the basis of prayer and simply express our petition, that we, who believe Mary to be the Mother of God may be helped by her intercession. A few words, but how they sum up in direct prayer the thoughts that have been ever rising in our mind during Matins and Lauds ! If she be the Mother of God, and all her graces flow from this privilege, her intercession must be of the greatest value. Therefore, we ask our heavenly Father to grant it may be availing. To which all present say : "So be it."

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE SAINTS.

Ant. Sancti Dei omnes intercedere dignemini pro nostra omniúmque salute.

All ye saints of God vouchsafe to intercede for our salvation and for that of all.

Y. Letámmini in Dómino et exsultáte justi.

Be joyful in the Lord and rejoice, O ye just.

[1] Matt. vi. 9.

R. Et gloriámini omnes
recti corde.

Orémus.

*Protege Dómine pópulum
Tuum, et Apostolorum Tuorum
Petri et Pauli et aliorum
Apostolorum patrocinio confi-
déntem, perpétua defensione
consérva.*

Omnes Sancti Tui, quæsumus Dómine, nos ubique adjuvent: ut dum eorum mérita recólimus, patrocinia sentiámus: et pacem Tuam nostris concéde temporibus; et ab Ecclesia Tua cunctam repélle nequitiám: iter, actus et voluntates nostras, et ómnium famulorum Tuorum, in salutis Tuæ prosperitate dispóne: benefactoribus nostris sempitérna bona retribue: et ómnibus fidelibus defunctis réquiem ætérrnam concéde. Per Dóminum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium Tuum: Qui Tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spíritus sancti Deus: per ómnia sæcula sæculórum.

R. Amen.

Y. Dómine exáudi oratió-
nem meam.

R. Et clamor meus ad Te
veníat.

Y. Benedicámus Dómino.

R. Deo grátias.

Y. Fidelium animæ per
misericórdiam Dei requiészcat
in pace.

R. Amen.

*And be ye glorified all ye
righteous in heart.*

Let us pray.

*Protect, O Lord, Thy people,
and guard with perpetual
defence those who trust in the
patronage of Thine Apostles
Peter and Paul, and the other
Apostles.*

*May all Thy saints, we
beseech Thee, O Lord, help us
everywhere: and while we
venerate their merits let us ex-
perience their patronage: and
grant peace in our times,
and ward off from Thy Church
all iniquity: dispose our life,
our deeds, our will, and those
of all Thy servants, in the pros-
perity of Thy salvation: give
to our benefactors the good
things everlasting: and to all
the faithful dead grant rest
eternal. Through Thy Son,
our Lord, Jesus Christ, Who
with Thee in the unity of the
Holy Ghost, liveth and reigneth,
God, throughout all ages of
ages.*

Amen.

O Lord, hear my prayer.

*And let my cry come unto
Thee.*

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

*May the souls of the faithful
through the mercy of God rest
in peace.*

Amen.

Then is said one of the anthems of the Blessed Virgin, according to the season and, at the end :—

℣. *Divinum auxilium mâneat semper nobiscum.* May the Divine help remain with us always.

℞. *Amen.* Amen.

But if another hour be recited immediately after the *Pater noster*, the ℣. *Dôminus det nobis*, the Anthem, &c., are only said at the end of the last Hour.

The origin of the commemoration is interesting. As we have already pointed out the first addition to the Divine Office was a Little Office of All Saints, consisting of Lauds and Vespers. But when, at a later date, the *Cursus* of our Lady took the place of the various Little Offices in use, a remembrance of them, in the shape of commemorations with Versicle and Prayer, was introduced. These varied in different places. For instance, in a Benedictine *Cursus beat&ae Mari&ae*, belonging to the Monastery of Scholoyi (1513), we find after the Antiphon of All Saints, *Sancti Dei omnes*, prayers of SS. Peter and Paul, St. Benedict, and then of All Saints, *Omnes Sancti tui*. In the Dominican use (1529), the commemorations are of the Saints and of Peace : *Da pacem*. In the *Cursus beat&ae Virginis* of the Breviary for the Church of St. Donatus, Bruges (1520), we find, besides that of All Saints, one of the Holy Ghost, together with one of St. Basil, the local patron. In the old English Use of Sarum (the Primer) about (1420-30), the commemorations or "memorials" are (1) of the Holy Ghost ; (2) of the Blessed Trinity ; (3) of All Saints ; (4) of Peace : and to the various hours were joined as an additional *cursus*, commemorations of the Passion. This accounts for the various additional offices formerly in use, with the exception of that for the Dead. In the revised *Cursus* used to-day we can find in the commemoration of All Saints and its accompanying prayers traces of all the other little Offices in general use. First, there is the Antiphon with Versicle and Response ; then the prayer which recalls the Little Office of the Apostles. This is followed by a long prayer made up of many ideas blended into one : (1) That of All Saints corresponding to the Antiphon ; (2) then the prayer for Peace ; (3) then the prayer for the Dead ; (4) then the general prayer to the Blessed

Trinity. Between the prayer for Peace and that for the Dead are inserted two other petitions, the idea of the first seemingly taken from the two prayers at Prime in the Divine Office, and the other a prayer for benefactors. Upon what principle these two last came to be added we cannot tell, except that the composite prayer, *Omnes sancti tui*, having a ring of a supplication for all estates of the Church, these two were added for the sake of completeness [1].

In this prayer we have all God's Church united, the Church in heaven, in purgatory and on earth. And thus united we place ourselves under the protection of the Queen of All Saints, of the Mother of the whole Church, and then approach the Throne of grace.

The concluding Versicles, which are used at most of the hours, call for but little comment. The invitation to *Bless the Lord* reminds us that, though we conclude our official act of blessing God, we are not to cease in our private capacity from continuing to praise God by a life of union with Him. "Thus," says the author of the *Myroure*, "ye began your Matins with prayer and ye end them with thanksgiving. For like as at the beginning of any good deed, we ought to know our own weakness and therefore pray for help; rightly so at the end, if aught be good, we ought to offer it up to Him with thanksgiving for His part and humble ourselves for our part. And take heed that ye say not: We bless God, or We thank God; but ye say Bless we, and Thank we, stirring yourself to bless Him and thank Him more and more. For ye can never bless Him nor thank Him as much as He is worthy; and therefore you end in desiring to bless Him and thank Him ever more and more" [2].

The aspiration for the Faithful departed is a touching proof of the Church's care and love for her members who are in Purgatory. At the end of every hour she thus prays for them. It may serve to remind us, too, of our own death and of the need we shall be in one day of these same prayers. It

[1] The idea of the prayer for benefactors would likely be taken from the monastic additional prayers, the *preces familiares* mentioned on a former page.

[2] pp. 136-7.

will therefore stir us up to say it with fervour. The concluding *Pater noster* is evidently taken from the Holy Rule of St. Benedict who orders his monks to end their hours with this Divine prayer.

The Anthems of our Lady will be treated of at the end of the Compline.

After our visit to the Heavenly Court and having conversed face to face with God we should come down from the Mount of God with deep peace in our soul, a peace the world can neither give nor take away. The Versicle, *May the Lord grant us His peace*, is an echo of the last verse of the *Benedictus*. St. Paul's words should be in our minds when we say this : *And the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ* [1].

During two seasons of the year—Advent and Christmas-tide—certain variations are made in the Office on account of the special relation of our Lady to these two periods. We will now note them.

In Advent.

THE ANTIPHONS.

(1) *Missus est Gábriel Angelus ad Mariam Virginem desponsátam Joseph.*

(2) *Ave María, grátia plena : Dóminus tecum : Benedictatu in muliéribus. Alleluia.*

(3) *Ne timeas María, invenísti grátiam apud Dóminum : ecce concípies, et páries Filium. Alleluia.*

(4) *Dabit Ei Dóminus sedem David patris Ejus, et regnabit in ætérnum.*

(5) *Ecce ancilla Dómini, fiat mihi secúndum Verbum Tuum.*

The angel Gabriel was sent to Mary, a virgin espoused to Joseph.

Hail Mary, full of grace ! the Lord is with thee : blessed art thou amongst women. Alleluia.

Fear not, O Mary, thou hast found grace before the Lord ! Behold thou shalt conceive and bear a Son. Alleluia.

The Lord shall give Him the seat of David His father, and He shall reign for ever.

Behold the handmaiden of the Lord : be it done to me according to Thy Word.

LITTLE CHAPTER [1].

*Egredietur virga de radice
Fesse, et flos de radice ejus
ascendet. Et requiescet super
Eum spiritus Domini.*

*There shall come forth a rod
out of the stem of Fesse, and a
Flower shall grow up from his
root. And the Spirit of the
Lord shall rest upon Him.*

AT THE BENEDICTUS.

*Spiritus sanctus in te des-
cendet, Maria : ne timeas,
habebis in utero Filium Dei.
Alleluia.*

*The Holy Ghost shall come
down upon Thee, O Mary ;
thou shall have in thy womb
the Son of God. Alleluia.*

THE COMMEMORATION OF SAINTS.

*Ecce Dominus veniet et
omnes Sancti Ejus cum Eo :
et erit in die illa lux magna.
Alleluia.*

*℣. Ecce apparébit Dominus
super nubem candidam.*

*℞. Et cum Eo Sanctorum
millia.*

Orémus.

*Conscientias nostras, quæsu-
mus Domine, visitando puri-
fica : ut veniens Jesus Christus,
Filius Tuus, Dominus noster,
cum omnibus Sanctis, pará-
tam Sibi in nobis invéniat
mansiónem : Qui tecum vivit et
regnat in unitate Spiritus
sancti Deus : per omnia sæcula
sæculorum. Amen.*

*Lo, the Lord shall come
and with Him all His saints :
and in that day there shall be
a great light.*

*Behold the Lord shall appear
upon a shining cloud.*

*And with Him thousands of
saints.*

Let us pray.

*We beseech Thee, O Lord,
by visiting purify our con-
sciences, that Jesus Christ, Thy
Son, our Lord, coming with
all the saints, may find in us
a dwelling-place prepared for
Him : Who with Thee in the
Unity of the Holy Ghost, liveth
and reigneth God, throughout
ages of ages. Amen.*

The series of Antiphons are, as can be seen, taken from St. Luke's account of the Annunciation. Bearing this in mind, the Church would have us dwell on the sentiments of our ever dear and blessed Lady during the nine months she was preparing for the Birth of our Lord. In this spirit we should praise God in the Psalms for the wonders of grace He wrought in her soul at that period. The Antiphons are taken from the Office for the Feast of the Expectation of our Lady, which we mentioned as being made up of that earliest of Western offices of our Lady, written by St. Idelphonsus, bishop of Toledo. On the Little Chapter the author of the *Myroure* remarks : "Jesse was the father of King David, of whose lineage came our Lady, and therefore she is called the *rod* that came out of that *root*, Jesse. And out of her sprung a *Flower*, that is, our Lord Jesus Christ, upon Whom rested in most excellence the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost" [1].

The Antiphon at the *Benedictus* is taken from the first Vesper of the same feast and completes the Gospel narrative. The Commemoration of the Saints strikes another thought suitable to Advent. We are to prepare ourselves, as each year comes round, for the Coming of our Lord by mystical birth at Christmas ; but this is only as a preparation for His second Coming in the clouds and great majesty on the Day of Doom. This final Coming of the Judge is the thought which runs through the Commemoration. In the prayer that follows we may take *conscienc*es in two senses, or rather in two views, of the same thing, viz., our Reason to be purified so that we may know and therefore act ; or our Soul to be purified from the stains with which we have polluted it by acting against our reason or conscience. We may also notice that we pray our Lord may find in us a *mansion prepared for Him*, that is by union with Him, we, at the Judgment may hear from His lips the blissful sentence : *Come to the kingdom prepared for you*. As we treat Him here so will He treat us there : *With what measure ye mete, so shall it be meted unto you* [2].

At Christmastide.

THE ANTIPHONS.

(1) *O admirabile commercium: Creátor géneris humáni, animátum corpus sumens, de Virgine nasci dignátus est: et procedens sine sémine, largítus est nobis Suam deitátem.*

(2) *Quando natus es ineffabiliter ex Virgine, tunc implétæ sunt Scripturæ: sicut plúvia in vellus descendisti, ut salvum fáceres genus humánum: Te laudámus Deus noster.*

(3) *Rubum quem viderat Móyses incombústum, conservátam agnóvimus tuam laudábilem vírginitátem: Dei Génitrix, intercède pro nobis.*

(4) *Germinávit radix Jesse: orta est stella ex Jacob: Virgo péperit Salvatórem: Te laudámus Deus noster.*

(5) *Ecce María genuit nobis Salvatórem; quem Foánnes videns exclamávit, dicens: Ecce Agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccáta mundi. Alleluia.*

O wondrous intercourse! The Maker of the human race, taking a living body from the Virgin, didst deign to be born: and going forth as Man, without a father, didst bestow on us His Godhead.

When of the Virgin Thou was born after a manner unspeakable, then were fulfilled the Scriptures: like the dew on the fleece Thou didst come down to save the Human Race: We praise Thee, O our God.

As the bush which Moses saw unconsumed, we acknowledge thy glorious Virginity to have been preserved: O Mother of God, intercede for us.

The stem of Jesse has budded: the Star has risen from Jacob: the Virgin hath brought forth the Saviour. We praise Thee, O our God.

Lo, Mary hath borne for us the Saviour Whom when John saw he cried out, saying: Behold the Lamb of God, behold Him Who bears the sins of the world. Alleluia.

LITTLE CHAPTER.

Viderunt eam filiae Sion, et beatissimam prædicaverunt: et reginæ laudaverunt eam.

The daughters of Sion have seen her and have called her most blessed: the queens, and they praised her.

AT THE BENEDICTUS.

Mirabile mystérium declaratur hódie : innovántur natúræ, Deus homo factus est : id quod fuit permánsit, et quod non erat assúmpsit : non commixtió-nem passus, neque divisió-nem.

A marvellous mystery is declared to-day : natures are newly set : God was made man : that which He was He remained : and that which He was not He has assumed, having undergone neither mingling nor division.

COLLECT.

Deus, qui salútis æternæ, bé-átæ Marlæ virginitáte fecunda, humano géneri præmia præsti-tisti : tribue quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis intercédere sentiámus, per quam merúimus Auctórem vitæ suscipere, Dó-minum nostrum Jesum Chris-tum, Filium tuum. Amen.

O God, Who by the fruitful maidenhood of blessed Mary hath proffered rewards to the human race, grant, we be-seech Thee, that we may ex-perience the intercession on our behalf of her through whom we merited to receive the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son. Amen.

These Antiphons are taken from the Church's Office for the Feast of the Circumcision. Occupied as she is on Christmas Day with the Birth of the Son, the Church instituted, on the octave day, a special commemoration of the Mother. As the cycle of the feasts of the year developed, the Feast of the Circumcision arose and with it was blended the older office celebrated on this day. The Office of joy and admiration at Mary's Maternity has been fittingly chosen for this holy season.

In the first Antiphon the last words remind us of the saying of one of the doctors of the Church : God became Man that man might become God, meaning thereby that sharing of the Divine Nature by grace of which St. Peter speaks : *Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . that by these ye might be made partakers of the Divine*

Nature [1]; and St. Paul : *For we were made partakers with Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end* [2]; or again; *In that we might be partakers of His holiness* [3]; or once more : *The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children His heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ* [4].

The second Antiphon contemplates the mystery of the Mother-maiden. As the dew fell on Gideon's fleece, but left the earth round about all dry, so the operation of the overshadowing Holy Ghost made Mary to be a Mother without ceasing to be a Maid. And as silently as falls the dew was the mystery wrought : *Whilst all things were in deep silence and the night was in the midst of her course, Thine almighty Word, O Lord, leaped down from His royal seat* [5].

This miracle extorts from us the cry as we contemplate it : *We praise Thee, O our God*. The same thought is amplified in the third Antiphon. As the burning bush was on fire and not consumed, so Mary's maidenhood was fruitful and not lost. And it was her purity and her grace that kept her unconsumed in that intimate union with her Maker; for what Creature, unless specially supported by God, can be so near without failing; according to that word of the Prophet : *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* [6] the everlasting burnings of the holiness of the Godhead.

The root of Jesse, David's father, and the Star Balaam saw in vision from Mount Peor [7], are celebrated in the next Antiphon, and find their antitype in the Saviour born of the Virgin. And again our praise bursts forth at the thought. But Mary's Child is also the Lamb for the Sacrifice; and the Precursor points Him out as such : *Behold the Lamb of God Who bears the sins of the world* [8]. The shadow of Calvary thus falls across the Manger, and in the Babe we see Him of Whom it was written : *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our infirmities, for the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity*

[1] 2 Pet. i. 3, 4.

[2] Heb. iii. 14.

[3] *Ibid.* xii. 10.

[4] Rom. viii. 16, 17.

[5] Wisdom xviii. 15.

[6] Is. xxxiii. 14.

[7] Num. xxiv. 17.

[8] John i. 29.

of us all [1]. This fifth Antiphon gives a special meaning to the Psalms of praise that follow.

The Little Chapter has already been commented on ; but here we may take the words of God's servants on earth and the blessed in heaven contemplating the blissful Mother in adoration before her newborn Son ; for *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever* [2], is always to His Mother the Babe of Bethlehem, as well as the Boy of Nazareth, the Man of Galilee, and the Victim of Calvary.

The Antiphon at the *Benedictus* is full of great thoughts. The Incarnation which it celebrates is a mystery which leads us into the very centre of the Godhead. The Second Person of the Adorable Trinity, distinct from Father and Son, has from all eternity the Nature of God. What He was He remained when He became Man, that is, always God. What He had not, that is, having a human Nature, He at that moment assumed. In other words, He was God from all eternity, and Man from the date of His Incarnation. There was no mingling of the two Natures, each remained distinct ; but they were united by the One divine Person Who made them both His very Own. This is the mystery of the Incarnation. We know what was done ; but for the rest we can only worship in silent love.

In the Collect our Lord is called the *Author of Life*, according to the words of St. Peter : *But Jesus, the Author of Life, ye have slain* [3]. He is also called, with the same meaning, *the Author of Eternal Salvation* [4], and the *Author and Finisher of our Faith* [5]. In Him Who says of Himself, *I am the Life* [6], the Apostle tells us *was life and the life was light* [7]. It is that supernatural life of grace which He shares with us, and which, beginning in Baptism, and destined to go on for all eternity, we, in this Collect, put specially under the patronage of our Lady.

[1] Is. liii. 4.
[2] Heb. xiii. 8.
[3] Acts iii. 15.
[4] Heb. v. .

[5] *Ibid.* xii. 2.
[6] John xi. 25.
[7] *Ibid.* i. 4.

CHAPTER IV.

AT PRIME : THE FIRST HOUR.

AVE MARIA AND INTRODUCTORY VERSICLES AS BEFORE.

Hymn.

<i>Memento rerum Cónditor,</i>	<i>Remember, O Creator Lord,</i>
<i>Nostri quod olim córporis,</i>	<i>That in the Virgin's sacred</i>
	<i>womb</i>
<i>Sacráta ab alvo Virginis</i>	<i>Thou wast conceived, and of</i>
	<i>her flesh</i>
<i>Nascéndo, formam sumpseris.</i>	<i>Didst our mortality assume.</i>
<i>Maria Mater grátia,</i>	<i>Mother of grace ! O Mary</i>
	<i>blest !</i>
<i>Dulcis parens cleméntia,</i>	<i>To thee, sweet fount of love, we</i>
	<i>fly ;</i>
<i>Tu nos ab hoste, prótege,</i>	<i>Shield us through life and take</i>
	<i>us home</i>
<i>Et mortis hora súscipe.</i>	<i>To thy dear bosom when we die.</i>
<i>Jesu, Tibi sit glória,</i>	<i>O Jesus, born of Virgin bright,</i>
<i>Qui natus es de Virgine,</i>	<i>Immortal glory be to Thee ;</i>
<i>Cum Patre, et almo Spíritu,</i>	<i>Praise to the Father Infinite,</i>
<i>In sempiterna sæcula.</i>	<i>And Holy Ghost eternally.</i>
<i>Amen.</i>	<i>Amen.</i>

The Hymn, a continuation of the preceding, is so direct and simple that it needs but little comment. It is used at all the Little Hours and at Compline as well. The second verse is the same idea as the latter part of the "Hail Mary"; and, repeated so many times in the day, it will serve to remind us that the enemy is always persevering, death is always at hand ;

but, as surely, Mary, the Mother of Grace, is always nigh to her children.

THE ANTIPHON.

This is taken from the first Antiphon at Lauds and varies according to the season. For its explanation see under Lauds.

PSALM LIII.

Title.—(1) Unto the end, in verses, understanding for David. (2) When the men of Ziph had come and said to Saul : *Is not David hidden with us ?* [1].

Tomasi : That Christ, ascending the heavens, looked upon His enemies with adverse face. The voice of one praying to Christ. The voice of Christ praying to His Father in every trouble. The Prophet concerning him who suffers persecutions for the name of the Lord.

Venerable Bede : David, when beset with trouble, but unexpectedly set free, understood what should happen to the Church of Christ, whereof he himself was a member. The occasion of the Psalm was when the Ziphites came to Saul in Gibeah, saying : *Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds in the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon ?* The Prophet, freed from the perils of Saul, thanks the Lord, throughout the Psalm, that the treason of the Ziphites had not been able to hurt him.

(1) <i>Deus in Nómine Tuo</i>	<i>Save me, O God, for Thy</i>
<i>salvum me fac : et in virtúte</i>	<i>Name's sake : and in Thy</i>
<i>Tua júdica me.</i>	<i>strength judge Thou me.</i>

That Name—the Name of Jesus Who *shall save His people from their sins* [2].

Judge me when Thou, Who camest before in poverty, comest again in majesty to the Doom, and burning up the chaff, bring me as wheat into Thy garner. Thus St. Augustine.

[1] 1 Kings xxiii. 19. St. Augustine commenting on this title says : Saul, the persecutor of David, is a type of Satan ; David, hiding in the village of Ziph, is a type of Christ. The Ziphites, who betrayed him, and whose name signifies “men flourishing,” signify the false friends of Christ and His cause.

[2] Matt. i. 21.

In Thy strength. Of all strength love is the strongest: *Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it* [1]. And what is that strength? asked Hugh of St. Victor. It is nothing else but the weakness of the Gospel, where defeat is victory, where shame is glory, where reprobation is crowning, where death is life. Again, *in Thy strength*, that is, the Holy Ghost, Who is the strength of the Most High and Who rules us by the Law of Liberty, thus giving us strength over the enemies who seek to enslave us. St. Bruno points out that, taking the whole Psalm of our Lord Himself, we may see here His prayer for His Resurrection; and the clear warning to the Jews of their peril. And that *for Thy Name's sake*, for, *I seek not Mine Own glory* [2].

(2) *Deus exaudi orationem meam: auribus percipe verba oris mei.*

O God, hear my prayer: and hearken unto the words of my mouth.

(3) *Quoniam alieni insurrexerunt adversum me, et fortes quæsiérunt animam meam: et non proposuerunt Deum ante conspectum suum.*

For strangers have risen up against me, and tyrants have sought my life: and they have not set God before their eyes.

It is well said, remarks the Carthusian, *Hear my prayer*, and then *hearken*. *Hear*, the weaker word; but *hearken*, that is to say, according to the exact words, *perceive with the ears*, or, in other words, *hear*, in the sense of listening to, so as to grant *the words of my mouth*. *My Mouth*, indeed, my Mediator, my Advocate, hearken unto the words of the Word; to the words of Him, the true Aaron of Whom Thou hast said: *Is not Aaron thy Brother? I know that He can speak well* [3].

For strangers. The Ziphites were of David's own kinsmen and dependants; and yet they sought to betray him; even as the Jews did to our Lord, their King, giving Him over to Pilate and Herod. In the mystical sense, *Strangers*; my own rebellious will and passion, *have risen up against me*, as in a civil war in domestic rebellion. And *tyrants*, as being all the servants of that one tyrant; the tyrant in opposition to the

[1] Cant. viii. 7.

[2] John viii. 50.

[3] Exod. iv. 14.

King ; the rebellious chief of Babylon in contradistinction to the peaceful monarch in Jerusalem. Thus St. Bruno of Asté, and St. Bonaventure.

(4) <i>Ecce enim Deus adjuvat</i>	<i>Behold, for God is my helper :</i>
<i>me : et Dominus susceptor est</i>	<i>and the Lord is the upholder</i>
<i>animæ meæ.</i>	<i>of my soul.</i>

How shall we take this ? With St. Gregory the Great, of the Synagogue looking and longing for the Messias ? or of our Lord Himself relying on the love of the Father, as with that thought of the *twelve legions of Angels* [1] ; as with that declaration : *I know Thou hearest Me always* [2] ? Or lastly, shall we take it of the Church, knowing that as the Father was the Helper of Christ, so that Father and that Christ will be her aid and, against whatever enemies, will *uphold her soul* ?

(5) <i>Avérte mala inimicis</i>	<i>Turn back evil on mine</i>
<i>meis : et in veritate Tua dis-</i>	<i>enemies : and in Thy truth</i>
<i>pérde illos.</i>	<i>scatter them.</i>

Mine enemies, the devils, are confirmed in wickedness ; and the evil they plan against God's servants recoil upon themselves.

In Thy truth. Our sole hope of victory lies in the promise of grace when we call upon God. Relying on this promise we *resist the devil*, and he flees from us [3] ; and we find in the hour of temptation that the Divine Word is ever faithful : *The God of all grace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly* [4].

(6) <i>Voluntarie sacrificábo</i>	<i>Right willingly will I sacri-</i>
<i>Tibi et confitébor Nómmini Tuo,</i>	<i>fice to Thee, and praise Thy</i>
<i>Domine ! quóniam bonum est.</i>	<i>Name, O Lord ! because it is</i>
	<i>good.</i>

These words refer to the freewill offering of Christ Himself upon the Cross ; and to that which is continually being presented by Him, our Great High Priest, in the Adorable Sacrifice of the Mass. Again, this verse, coming as it does in the Morning Office, reminds us of the Mass we are so soon

[1] Matt. xxvi. 53.

[2] John xi. 42.

[3] James iv. 7.

[4] Rom. xvi. 20.

to assist at. We must join willingly in that Sacrifice if we would profit by it. *For it is good.* What? The Name of the Lord, or that which we are going to offer? In the latter sense our offering is indeed *good*; for it is nothing else but the Body and Blood of the God-Man, a better gift than which cannot be found. It is simply *good*. The verse also reminds us of our own freewill consecration to God when we made, to the praise of His Name, the sacrifice of our persons, our wealth, and our wills in the *clean oblation* of religion. And how good it is! For day by day our Vocation grows dearer as we grow more and more in intimacy with the Spouse of our soul; and we taste and see how good He is. The Sacrifice we made to follow His Call is so small beside the gain, that we should do it over and over again, *counting all things loss if we can gain Christ* [1].

(7) *Quóniam ex omni tribulatione eripulsti me : et super inimicos meos despexit óculus meus.*

For Thou hast delivered me out of all trouble : and mine eyes hath looked down upon all mine enemies.

Says the Carthusian : Let us in conclusion hear our Lord speak in His Own Person : *Thou hast delivered Me*, indeed, from the false witnesses that agree not together ; *Thou hast delivered Me* from Annas, from Caiaphas, from Herod, from Pontius Pilate ; *Thou hast delivered Me* from the Scourging, from the Crowning, the Shame, and from the Crucifixion. But we must mark the deliverance came not as man could wish or imagine, but by that higher way which is the work of God's right hand.

Mine eye hath looked down upon mine enemies, gazing at them calmly and undismayed ; as a conqueror, says Bellarmine, surveys the bodies of his enemies on the battle-field, or a king from his throne looks on the captives brought to his feet. And in this latter sense the word suggests the crowning glory of the Ascension : *Thou hast led captivity captive* [2].

[1] Phil. iii. 7.

[2] Eph. iv. 8.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory to the Father Who is our Helper ; and to the Son for Whose Name's sake we are saved ; and to the Holy Ghost in Whose strength we are judged.

PSALM LXXXIV. [1]

Title.—Unto the end, for the Sons of Core.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ vouchsafed to show us His mercy by coming in the flesh. The voice of the Prophet to the Son. The Apostolic voice to the New People, redeemed by the Lord.

Venerable Bede : This Psalm, about to speak of the Lord's first Coming, is suited to the persons of them who have believed in Him with sincere minds. In the first part the Prophet gives thanks to the Lord, because from the old time of the Jewish nation the people have come to the worship of the Lord. The second treats of God's merciful dealings with His people, and looks for the Coming of Christ. In the third he turns to himself and foretells the Incarnation.

(1) *Benedixisti Dómine terram Tuam : avertisti captivitatem Jacob.*

Thou hast blessed, O Lord, Thy land : Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

The Son of God hath healed all things, filling the earth with blessings through the fertilising stream of His precious Blood. *The Lord hath blessed the land*, that is, says St. Bruno, the whole of mankind, by taking earth to Himself and making of it His Holy Flesh ; and, as our English mystic, Richard Rolle, says, He has especially blessed one part of it, that garden enclosed, His Own most blessed Maiden-mother, who brought forth the Fruit of Salvation. Cardinal Hugo remarks : He blesses every faithful soul which yields itself to His care ; *for the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth*

[1] This is one of the Psalms used as a preparation for Mass.

blessing from God [1]. That *captivity* is the bondage of Original Sin, whereby men lay fettered in the chains of the devil; but now, saith the Lord of Hosts, *He shall let go My captives but not for price or reward* [2]; for Christ hath *turned away the captivity*. But, as St. Augustine says, not, however, of all, but only of *Jacob*; that is, of the younger people of all who by faith descend from Abraham; of all who, like Jacob, do not remain in slumber, but rise up and wrestle against their sins. How specially true this is of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady, in which mystery the *captivity* of Original Sin is turned away, is too clear to need further comment.

(2) <i>Remisisti iniquitatem</i>	<i>Thou hast forgiven the</i>
<i>plebis Tuæ: operuisti omnia</i>	<i>iniquity of Thy people: Thou</i>
<i>peccata eorum.</i>	<i>hast covered all their sins.</i>

This, says St. Augustine, is the true explanation of the previous verse. It teaches us that Sin is the hardest of all captivity, and that God's Law is the most perfect of all freedom. Cassiodorus observes that the word *forgiven* denotes the bounty of God's grace. He is not spoken of as accepting payment of our debts, but as remitting it freely.

And covered all their sins by plunging them beneath the waters of Baptism and Penance. He does not merely *cover* them, leaving them still there, He takes them away altogether, as fire covers the blackness of coal when it has once made its way into the substance of the coal, and destroys it in the very act of so doing. So the fire which the Lord came to send upon the earth takes away that sin which causes it to be said of sinners: *Their visage is blacker than the coal* [3]. Thus Albert the Great. This, then, is His tender love, that *Charity which covereth a multitude of sins* [4]. Lorin takes the *forgiveness* as applying to Mortal, and the *covering* as referring to Venial, offences.

(3) <i>Mitigasti omnem iram</i>	<i>Thou hast taken away all</i>
<i>Tuam: avertisti ab ira indig-</i>	<i>Thy displeasure: Thou hast</i>
<i>nationis Tuæ.</i>	<i>turned away from the anger</i>
	<i>of Thy wrath.</i>

[1] Heb. vi. 7.

[2] Is. xlv. 13.

[3] Lam. iv. 8.

[4] 1 Peter iv. 8.

Mitigated. Haymo says : God in this life punishes us for our sin, but gently, and not beyond our endurance ; and that He does not give us everything here, so that we may have somewhat better to look for hereafter. And whereas it is said *all Thy displeasure*, we are to understand on the one hand God's wrath against both original and actual sin, and on the other His temporal and eternal punishments, on account of the infinite value of the Divine Victim of propitiation, so no penalty will remain in such who make full use of the salvation He offers to all. For, says the Carmelite, He stands before His Father as our High Priest, and pleads on our behalf with an intercession which must prevail, as He says by His Prophet : *Remember that I stood before Thee to speak good for them, and to turn away Thy wrath from them* [1]. Albert the Great points out that in these three verses we have six blessings of God set forth in as many words : Thou hast *blessed* Thy land, Lord Jesus, by Thy birth ; Thou hast *turned* away the captivity by Thy preaching ; Thou hast *forgiven* our offence by Thy dying ; Thou hast *covered* all our sins by Thy resurrection ; Thou hast *taken away* Thy displeasure by sending the Holy Ghost ; Thou hast *turned away* our sins by leading us to heaven and averting the terrors of the Doom.

(4) *Convérte nos Deus . Turn us, O God, our Saviour ;*
salutáris noster : et averté and turn away Thine anger
iram Tuam a nobis. from us.

These words are used at the beginning of Compline. Cassiodorus understands the Prophet, after giving God thanks for the promised Incarnation, to look forward and see the Rejection and Crucifixion ; and so he here prays that these new sins also may be pardoned.

Turn us, too, says St. Bruno, who have so ill-requited Thy bounty, *turn us* from captivity to freedom, from cursing to blessing, from sinfulness to forgiveness.

Turn away Thine anger from us. How is it that the weight of God's wrath is kept from falling on the sinful world ? It is the power of the Mass which stays His hand. It is also those

[1] Jer. xviii. 20.

hidden lives of sacrifice, of penance, of prayer, which, unknown to the world, are passed in the cloister, and, through the merits of the Redeemer, go far to appease the anger of the Lord.

(5) *Numquid in ætérnum irascéris nobis ? aut exténdes iram Tuam a generatióne in generatióne ?* *Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever ? And wilt Thou stretch out Thy wrath from one generation to another ?*

Not for ever, says St. Augustine, as God's displeasure means the punishment He inflicts upon us here below for our sins. He made us therefore in Adam, mortal and capable of suffering, but renews us in Christ, giving us a share in His immortality and impassibility. He has thus shown that His displeasure will pass away according to that saying : *For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive* [1].

From one generation to another. We may feel a doubt as to His entire good-will towards us and fear lest He should visit the sin of the fathers upon the children ; but we have His word spoken by His Prophet : *The son shall not bear the iniquity of his father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son* [2]. From this we learn that the guilt of sin is always personal to him who commits it ; and that what we often regard as the punishments of sin are not so in fact. They are but God's way of working out the good He has in view. Again, we may take the two *generations* to refer to the two great dates in man's spiritual history ; from Adam to Christ, and from Christ to Doom ; the *generation* of the Law, and the *generation* of the Gospel. We therefore beseech God not to be angry with us as He was with the former *generation*, because we, though liable to fall into sin, desire to wash away its stains by the sacraments of reconciliation.

(6) *Deus Tu convérsus vivificábis nos : et plebs Tua lætábitur in Te.* *Thou, O God, being turned, wilt quicken us : and Thy people shall rejoice in Thee.*

Says the Carmelite : When a man is turned from us we see not his face, and cannot recognise him surely ; but when

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.

[2] Ezek. xviii. 20.

he turns round and shows it, then we know him at once. So before the Incarnation God was, as it were, turned away from men : *For no man hath seen God at any time* [1] ; but He turned His face towards us in that Mystery which is the cause of our justification, whereby we are quickened. Thus when St. Peter fell he continued in his denial till *the Lord turned and looked on him* [2], and that one look quickened the hardened heart and brought a flood of penitential tears from the Rock. And thus, too, does He deal with all other sinners who do not keep their faces obstinately averted from Him ; so that, as St. Bruno says, they rejoice at last in Him, no longer in the world and in their sins. He does not confine His mercy to this. But He will turn again and show us Himself in glory at the Last Day, and *quicken* us in the Resurrection and make us *rejoice* in immortality and blessedness.

(7) *Ostēde nobis Dómine
misericórdiam Tuam : et Salu-
tāre Tuum da nobis.*

*Show us, O Lord, Thy mercy :
and grant us Thy Salvation.*

These words, together with the preceding verse, are used in the beginning of the Mass. *Thy mercy* is Jesus. The fathers universally interpret this verse as a prayer for the Coming of Christ Who is the Mercy of God visiting us from on high. The Carthusian explains these words in this way : *Show us O Lord Thy mercy*, that is, show forth clearly and plenteously in us the working of Thy loving kindness ; and *grant us Thy salvation*, that is, Thy healing redemption, or even Christ Himself, by giving Him to us daily in the Sacrament of the Altar, and by His spiritual coming to dwell in us, as it is written of Him, under the name of Wisdom : *Give me Wisdom that sitteth by Thy Throne* [3]. Give us Thy Christ, says St. Augustine, let us know Thy Christ, let us behold Thy Christ. Not as the Jews beheld Him and crucified Him ; but as the Angels behold Him and rejoice. Bellarmine explains the verse of the perfect *salvation* which is completed in the final Resurrection ; for then God will show us the fulness of His mercy so that we may see it and, as it were, touch it ; when

[1] John i. 18.

[2] Luke xxii. 61.

[3] Wisdom ix. 4.

He shall crown us with His loving-kindness, and heal all our infirmities, and satisfy our desire with good things, and renew our youth as the eagle [1]. And He will then give us *His Salvation* for an everlasting possession when He shall manifest Himself to us. We ask first for *mercy* and then for *salvation*. The first is the cause, and the second the effect. *Mercy* is grace, and *salvation* is glory.

(8) *Audiam quid loquatur in me Dóminus Deus : quóniam loquétur pacem in plebem Suam.*

I will hear what the Lord God will say in me : For He shall speak peace unto His people.

(9) *Et super sanctos Suos : et in eos, qui convertúntur ad cor.*

And unto His saints and unto them who are converted at heart.

In me. The Prophet Habacuc saith : *I will watch and see what He will say in me* [2] ; and the Apostle : *Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me* [3]. St. Augustine observes that when Christ speaks *in* a man, He speaks *to* him ; and what He speaks on this occasion is that *peace* which surpasseth all understanding, and which is bestowed on all who render unto God that which is God's, and are truly *His saints* because they are *converted* to Him, not feignedly, but from the depths of their heart. The Psalmist says, I will *hearken*, because the roar and tumult of the world is all around him and he must close his ears to it if he would hear the voice of God. St. Bernard says : When evil thoughts arise within us, we speak ourselves ; when good ones, it is God Who speaks within us : our heart utters the first and hearkens to the second. The *Peace* which God speaks, the Word He utters, is our Lord Jesus Himself, the Prince of Peace. He spoke this Word to His people and to His saints, that is, to all Jews and to those who believed and loved Him—such as the Apostles.

Unto them who are converted in heart. These form a third class, to wit, the Gentiles. Cardinal Hugo applies the whole verse to Christians. He takes the *people* as the laity ; the *saints*, the clergy, and those *converted at heart*, as the religious orders. He likewise remarks that *peace* is threefold : *Peace*

[1] Cf. Ps. civ. 3-5.

[2] ii. 1.

[3] 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

with God, as it is written : *He shall make peace with me* [1] ; *Peace* with ourselves, according to our Lord's words : *These things have I spoken unto you that in Me ye might have peace* [2] ; and *Peace* with our neighbour, as the Apostle says : *As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men* [3].

(10) <i>Verūmtamen prope timētes Eum salutāre ipsius : ut inhābitet glōria in terra nostra.</i>	<i>For His salvation is nigh unto them that fear Him : that glory may dwell in our land.</i>
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Therefore did He appear first among the Jews where there were some, at least, *to fear Him*. Yet even, as St. Augustine says, this fear was a carnal one, a dread of temporal punishments and loss. The Jews asked for just the same things as the Pagans did. There was only this difference—they asked of the true God. Nevertheless, even this imperfect knowledge and service was so far rewarded that *Glory did dwell in the land*. For they had the Patriarchs and Prophets, they had the Temple, the centre of worship ; with them dwelt the Maiden who bore Her Lord ; then in their midst was He Himself born and held converse among men, wrought His miracles, founded His Church, and finished our Redemption. *His salvation is nigh unto them that fear Him* ; in that they are careful to watch lest they should fall, that at the end of their trial *glory*, the glory of immortality, *may dwell* in that earth of their now mortal bodies. He makes another *glory*, a good conscience, dwell within His servants, as St. Paul says : *For our glory is this, the testimony of our conscience* [4]. Again, in the Blessed Eucharist : *His salvation is nigh to all that fear Him* ; for in this Sacrament of the Altar He has given *food to those that fear Him* [5]. Wherefore it is written : *The Word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart* [6]. And lastly, the *glory* of holiness and good works done by the saints dwells *in our land*, and so shines before men that they glorify our Father Who is in heaven.

[1] Is. xxvii. 5.

[2] John xvi. 33.

[3] Rom. xii. 18.

[4] 2 Cor. i. 12.

[5] Ps. cx. 4.

[6] Deut. xxx. 14.

(11) *Misericórdia et veritas Mercy and Truth are met
obviavérunt Sibi: justitia et together: and Justice and
pax osculátæ sunt. Peace have kissed.*

Man, says St. Bernard, lost *Justice* when Eve obeyed the serpent's voice, and Adam the woman's rather than the Divine One. He lost *Mercy*, in that Eve, to satisfy her desires, spared neither herself, her husband, nor posterity, but bound all alike under the curse: and Adam, in that he exposed the woman, for whom he had sinned, to the Divine Wrath, trying to shun the arrow, as it were, behind her back. Woman and Man lost *Truth*, the first by perverting the warning, *Thou shalt surely die* [1], into the milder, *Lest ye die* [2]; while Adam offered a vain and false excuse. And lastly, they lost *Peace*, for saith the Lord: *There is no peace to the wicked* [3]. Hence, after the Fall there was, as it were, a serious conflict between the four virtues; for *Truth* and *Justice* were for punishing the wretched sinner, while *Peace* and *Mercy* were for sparing him. How these four virtues, parted in the First Man, met again in the Second, we may readily learn. For Christ showed *Mercy* in healing the sick; *Truth* in teaching and speaking; *Justice* when He reproved sinners, and praised the godly; and *Peace* in His meekness and gentleness. Further, the Divine Nature of Christ may be called *Mercy*, for it forgives sins; and His Human Nature *Truth*, because no guile was found in Him.

They *met together*, that is, they were united in the Hypostatic Union. *Justice* also is taken for the Divine Nature; for God alone is the righteous Judge. *Peace*, on the other hand, stands for the Human Nature, on account of our Lord's noble and innate meekness. Again, *Mercy and Truth met together* in the Incarnation, because it was *Mercy* which drew the Lord down to His creatures, that the *Truth* of the promises might be fulfilled, that *Justice* might be satisfied by a Divine Victim, and that *Peace* might be re-established between God and Man. If we lay stress on the words *met* and *kissed*, they will denote that the union of persons coming from opposite directions is expressed; we may therefore take the verses as signifying the reconciliation of God and Man.

[1] Gen. ii. 17.

[2] *Ibid.* iii. 3.

[3] Is. xlviii. 22.

God's *Mercy* encourages man to confess his sins, and so to meet *Mercy* with *Truth*. God's *Justice* in fulfilling His promises gives the comfort of *Peace* to the conscience of His people.

(12) <i>Véritas de terra orta est : et justitia de cælo prospexit.</i>	<i>Truth hath sprung from the earth : and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.</i>
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The very *Truth*, the Son of God, *hath sprung out of the earth*, being born of His Maiden-mother. *Righteousness* looked down from heaven when the Eternal Word stooped from His Throne of Glory and united Himself in hypostatic union to the Nature of Man. Thus was fulfilled that prayer : *Drop down ye heavens from above, and let the clouds pour down the Righteous One : Let the earth open and let it bring forth a Saviour* [1]. There is another sense, says St. Augustine, for these words : Now that man has been brought near to God, he is moved to confession of his sins, so that the *truth springs up* in frank acknowledgment of transgressions from the sinner who is but *earth*, and *righteousness* then looks down from heaven to pardon and wash away the offences.

(13) <i>Etenim Dóminus dabit benignitatem : et terra nostra dabit Fructum suum.</i>	<i>Yea, the Lord shall show loving-kindness : and our land shall give its Fruit.</i>
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The Psalmist proceeds to explain the mystery of the Incarnation, and shows that *Truth* will spring out of the earth, not in the manner that fruits spring out of the ground ploughed and sown by the labour of man, but as flowers spring up in the open plains without human culture, by the rain from heaven and the sunshine that falls upon them. For, saith he, *the Lord shall give His loving-kindness*, that is, shall send His Holy Spirit from heaven to overshadow the Maiden ; and so *our land*, untilled, unsown, and altogether virginal, *shall give her Fruit*. Wherefore He saith of Himself in the Canticles : *I am the Flower of the field and the Lily of the valley* [2] ; or again, the Divine Nature of Christ is the loving-kindness of God ; His Human Nature the *Fruit of our land*. Thus Bellarmine.

[1] Is. xlv. 8.

[2] ii. 1.

Some of the earlier commentators see, in these words, the result of our Lord's Coming in the fruits of penance and good works put forth by men under the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness, when the rain of tears poured forth in sorrow for sin has caused the good seed sown in their hearts by the Sower to spring up and yield increase. Thus St. Augustine.

(14) *Iustitia ante Eum* *Righteousness shall walk*
ambulabit: et ponet in via *before Him: and He shall set*
gressus Suos. *His steps in the way.*

That is, *righteousness* shall go behind Him as well as before, deepening, as it were, His track, that they who follow may not miss it. Observe, says Arnobius [1], that where *righteousness* goes first, God steadily follows. Others take it that when *righteousness* hath so prepared the way for Christ, then will He Himself set His feet upon the road and come to visit those who have thus made ready for His coming. Says the Carmelite: He makes this road henceforth a *way* for all those who would follow Him; and, even in the works of penance, He Who did no sin was not content to be a preacher only, but gave us example of His vigils, fasts, journeyings, and other bodily toils. Again, *Righteousness goes* before the people of Christ to show them the way to Him, and to set their feet in it that they may not err.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who speaketh Peace unto His saints. Glory to the Son in Whom Mercy and Truth are met together. Glory to the Holy Ghost the Loving-kindness of the Lord.

PSALM CXVI.

Title.—Alleluia.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ by the Coming of the Holy Ghost hath stablished His Mercy upon us. The voice of the Apostles to the Gentiles. A speech of the Prophet concerning God's praise.

[1] He flourished in France at the latter part of the fifth century, and wrote a Commentary on the whole Psalter.

Venerable Bede : There are but two verses ; yet words, however few, in praise of the Lord are always most full. We should apply this Psalm also to the person of the martyrs who now, having as it were achieved their glorious passion, arouse all other nations to the praises of the Lord Who hath done such things for His servants that they too may be the rather imbued with His example.

(1) <i>Laudate Dóminum omnes gentes : laudáte Eum omnes populi.</i>	<i>O praise the Lord all ye heathen : O praise ye Him all ye nations.</i>
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This Psalm, says a Jewish commentator, consists but of two verses and refers to the days of the Messias. And by making it consist of only two verses, the Psalmist implies that all nations shall be put into two classes—Israel and the Gentiles. As these latter form the more numerous and more zealous portion, says Lorin, they are placed before the Jews in the order of the verse. St. Paul cites this verse when arguing for the union of Jew and Gentile in one church [1]. An old commentator bids us note that the first part of the injunction began to be fulfilled when the Wise Men came with the gifts to Bethlehem, and the latter when the inscription in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew was set up over the Cross. The Carmelite says it is fulfilled continually in three classes of worshippers—devout pilgrims here on earth, souls in purgatory, and the blessed in heaven ; all of whom join in the chorus of praise to God.

(2) <i>Quóniam confirmáta est super nos misericórdia Ejus : et véritas Dómini manet in ætérnum.</i>	<i>For His mercy is confirmed upon us : and the Truth of the Lord abideth for ever.</i>
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The Jews dwelt on the word *us* ; and St. Paul allows this saying : *Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the Truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers* [2]. But he goes on to show that the word *us* is used in a wider and more loving sense, which identifies Jew and Gentile as one new people ; for he continues : *And that the Gentile should glorify God for His Mercy.*

[1] Rom. xv. 4.

[2] Rom. xv. 8.

And the Truth of the Lord abideth for ever. That Truth is the Eternal Word, Who said : *I am the Way, the Truth and the Life* [1]. The Gospel, the *truth* that came by Jesus, abideth for ever : *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away* [2]. And the *Mercy*, when He said, *It is finished* ; for then, having tasted of the sharpness of death, He opened the gates of heaven to all believers. Bellarmine remarks that the Apostle, when he says the Gentiles are to praise God for His *Mercy* and that *Truth* belongs to the Jews because God confirmed to them the promises made to the fathers, does not mean that the Jews have no part in the *Mercy* ; but that *Mercy* alone is shown to the Gentiles, to whom God had made no promises whatever ; whereas in sending the Messias to the Jews He gave them both *Truth* and *Mercy*. His *Mercy* and *Truth* will *abide* for ever in yet another sense : in the enduring result of the sentence at the Doom, when He will save or condemn according to their deserts all who stand before His Judgment Seat.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father the Lord God of all. Glory to the Son, Whose Mercy is confirmed upon us. Glory to the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, Who abides ever with the Church.

LITTLE CHAPTER [3].

*Quæ est ista, quæ progréditur
quasi aurora consurgens, pul-
chra ut luna, electa ut sol,
terribilis ut castrorum acies
ordinata ?*

R. *Deo gratias.*

*Who is she that cometh forth,
as the rising morn, fair as the
moon, clear as the sun, and
terrible as an army in battle
array ?*

R. *Thanks be to God.*

As the material sun is rising in the skies at the hour of Prime it reminds us of our ever dear and blessed Lady who, by her rising in all the beauty of the Immaculate Conception, put an end to the long night which had overshadowed the

[1] John xiv. 6.

[2] Matt. xxiv. 35.

[3] Cant. vi. 10.

world since the Fall. She is *fair as the moon*, for she shines with a light not her own, but borrowed from the Sun of Righteousness Himself ; she is *clear as the sun*, for she became clothed with the same Sun of Righteousness, and charity covered her as with a mantle. She is *terrible* to our enemies ; for enmity has been put between them and her. This last thought encourages us to seek her protection during the coming day, for our enemies are hers. And this thought is carried on in the following versicle.

VERSICLE AND COLLECT.

℣. *Dignāre me laudāre te,
Virgo sacrāta.*

*Grant me grace to praise
thee, O sacred Virgin.*

℞. *Da mihi virtūtem con-
tra hostes tuos.*

*Give me strength against
thine enemies.*

These words of St. Ephrem were used as the Second Antiphon of the Third Nocturn, to which we refer the reader. Here only will we say they get a new force from the last words of the Little Chapter. We may note we do not ask for strength against *our* enemies, but against *her* enemies. For often those we count as our friends our Lady counts as her enemies ; for she sees that they are false friends to us and endanger the salvation of our souls.

The *Kyrie eléison* with the Versicle follow as at Lauds ; then is said the Prayer :—

*Deus, qui virginālem aulam
beātæ Mariæ in qua habitāre
eligere dignātus es : da quæ-
sumus, ut sua nos defensiōne
munitos, jucūdos facias suæ
interesse commemoratiōni :
Qui vivis, &c.*

*O God, Who didst deign to
choose the virginal womb of
Blessed Mary in which to
dwell : grant, we beseech, that
guarded by her defence we
may gladly take part in her
commemoration : Who liveth
and reigneth, &c.*

We find thoughts which suggest this prayer in the Little Chapter and in the 84th Psalm. There is also the note of warfare, of a struggle against her enemies. When she protects us, with joy and gladness we shall serve her and show our love

and gratitude by our devotion. The Office concludes with the same Versicles as at Lauds.

During Advent.

THE LITTLE CHAPTER [1].

*Ecce virgo concipiet et páriet
Fílium, et vocábitur nomen
ejus Emmánuel. Bútyrum, et
mel comedet ut sciat reprobáre
malum, et eligere bonum.*

*Behold a virgin shall con-
ceive and bear a Son, and
shall call His name Em-
manuel. Butter and honey
shall He eat, that He may
know to forsake Evil and
choose Good.*

These prophetic words of Isaias, declaring the Maiden-Motherhood of our Lady, are peculiarly appropriate to the Season of Advent. She was to be a virgin not only in conceiving but in bringing forth; and her Child was to be no ordinary Son, but Emmanuel, which, being interpreted is, *God with us*. Says the *Myroure*: "*Emmanuel* is as much as to say, *God with us*. For while He is God in His Own Nature, and with us in our Nature, so is He God and Man in one Person. By *butter and honey* we understand all other meats according to Man, whereby is shown that He was very man and lived, after His body, by man's meat. *And He shall know to forsake evil and choose good*; for though He were fed as an infant, yet He was as wise as when He came to man's age. They that treat of Nature say that cheese is evil, and the less it have of *butter* the worse it is. Therefore our Child ate *butter* that is without cheese, for He took our Nature without sin. He ate also *honey*, that is, sweet, for He delighted Him to do mercy to sinners and to all that were in disease or in need, the doing of which mercy was to Him sweeter than *honey*. A bee giveth *honey* and stingeth. So our sweet bee, Jesus Christ, in His first Coming gave honey of mercy and of pity. But they that will not dispose themselves to receive this *honey* here shall be stung with the tongue of sharp rigour at His second Coming, when He shall *forsake the evil* to endless pain and *choose the good* to everlasting bliss" [2].

[1] Is. vii. 14, 15.

[2] pp. 127-8.

The prayer is the same as at Lauds and is said at all the hours during the season.

At Christmas-tide.

The Little Chapter is *Quæ est ista*, as above ; and the Collect is that said at Lauds. The same prayer is said throughout the Office during this season.

CHAPTER V.

AT TERCE : THE THIRD HOUR.

The introductory Prayers and Hymns are the same as at Prime. The Antiphon is taken from Lauds (the second) according to the season.

PSALM CXIX.

Title.—A Song of Degrees [1].

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ may bestow on us a dart wherewith to confound unrighteous tongues. The voice of Christ in the Passion. The voice of Christ to the Father touching the Jews. The Songs of Degrees are the progresses of souls, whereby, ascending from the desire of a holy life to better things, they are perfectly delivered in heaven from trouble and perils of this present life.

Venerable Bede : “Songs of Degrees” are songs of Ascensions, whence the more significant Greek name is *Songs of goings up*, because they lead only towards heavenly things ; as though one had fallen into a pit and a ladder were set that he

[1] This Psalm begins what are called the “Gradual Psalms” or “Songs of Degrees.” One ancient Jewish view is that they were intended to be liturgically used in processions to the Temple, one upon each of the fifteen steps leading up to the great portal. But the most ancient Christian tradition, without being inconsistent with this one, is more probable, viz., that they are originally pilgrim songs for *going up* to Jerusalem. These Psalms were said daily before Matins in the reforms begun by St. Benedict of Aniane. At present they are said, in choirs, on Wednesdays in Lent, and are divided into three sets, each with its own Versicles and Collect : the first for the dead, the second for sinners, the third for all Christian folk. The recitation of the fifteen “Gradual Psalms” was a favourite private devotion of our catholic forefathers.

might be able to ascend. So when the people of Israel were come to the pit of captivity, and in their trouble called upon the Lord, they were heard and brought back to their country. After this example, whosoever falls into the pit of sin has degrees of humility whereby he may return above. Throughout the Psalm the Prophet speaks.

(1) *Ad Dóminum cum tribulárer clamávi : et exaudivit me.*

When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord : and He heard me.

Says St. John Chrysostom : Seest thou the gain of affliction, seest thou the readiness of mercy ? The gain of affliction, in that it brings men to pour forth holy prayers ; the readiness of mercy, granted at once when they call. Therefore Christ declares those blessed who mourn [1]. If, then, thou wouldest ascend these steps, cut away whatever is luxurious and relaxed in thy life, gird thyself with diligent conduct, and withdraw from earthly things. This is the first going-up. Even one step upwards is leaving earth ; and lowly as the place is, it is not the less the first elevation. Note the admirable order of the words. First comes trouble, then a cry, lastly a hearing ; to make us know that the prayers of the faithful reach the Lord in an appointed order. The *trouble* against which the saints call on God is not such as the world fears, but the snares of sin in all its forms, lest they should subdue our weak natures and drag us down to the depths of evil. And all true prayer for deliverance must unite in itself the three marks of this one ; necessity, *when I was in trouble* ; devotion, *I called* ; direction in the right way, *upon the Lord*. Thus St. Hilary and Cardinal Hugo.

(2) *Dómine libera ánimam meam a lábiis iníquis : et a lingua dolósa.*

Deliver my soul, O Lord, from unrighteous lips : and from a deceitful tongue.

St. Basil says, the moment a man begins to go up, that is, to think of advancing in spiritual things and of despising the world that he may cling to God alone, he begins to suffer from the tongues of adversaries, and, what is more grievous,

[1] Matt. v. 4.

from those who try to turn him away from salvation. He who does not suffer opposition may know that he is not even trying to advance.

Unrighteous lips. Such as are shameless, open in daring and execution. *A deceitful tongue* is treacherous and mischievous, by reason of dissembling, because it aims at overthrowing religion under the name of religion, and bends down to death with the hope of life. . . . We find them both in the history of our first parents. *Unrighteous lips* said, *Eat*. Then *the deceitful tongue* added, *Ye shall be as gods, ye shall not surely die* [1]. The Carmelite adds, it is not only from the wicked lips and tongues of others that the disciple of Christ needs to be delivered, but from his own; from all boastfulness, spiritual pride and glorying in his own merits.

(3) *Quid detur tibi, aut
quid apponatur tibi: ad lin-
guam dolosam?*

*What shall be given to thee,
or what shall be added to
thee: unto the deceitful
tongue?*

(4) *Sagittæ poténtis acútæ:
cum carbónibus desolatóriis.*

*The sharp arrows of the
Mighty, with desolating coals.*

St. Hilary explains this verse as, What weapons of defence shall be given to thee against evil speakers? In which case the next verse supplies the answer: the Word of God, sharp as an *arrow* in the hands of a strong man and consuming as red-hot *coals*. St. Augustine takes the *coals* as denoting the examples of those sinners, once cold and black, but now converted to God and glowing with His love. But other commentators, dwelling on the word *desolating*, think it is an awful warning against the destruction that attends the deeds of sinners and awaits themselves. Others take *coals* as fervent prayer in reference to the touching of Isaias' lips with a coal from the altar [2]. Another commentator notes that *arrows* at most take away life, and may be the cause of glory, as with martyrs; but *coals* brand where they touch and add dishonour to death. Another explanation takes *arrows* as the sting of conscience and *coals* as the punishment of a *deceitful tongue*.

[1] Gen. iii. 4, 5.

[2] Is. vi 6.

(5) *Heu mihi, quia incolatus meus prolongatus est; habitavi cum habitantibus Cedar: multum incola fuit anima mea.*

Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged; I have dwelt with the dwellers of Cedar: my soul hath been long a sojourner.

St. Hilary explains the verse in this manner: The saints long to be dissolved and to be with Christ [1]. The body is the dark tent (*Cedar* meaning black) in which the soul is imprisoned. He also lays stress on the word *with* (the dwellers of Cedar), as being something different from *in* their company. This denotes that although the saints live in the flesh, yet the arms of their warfare, not being carnal, they do not dwell in the tents of Cedar, but only beside them, and *are not in the flesh but in the spirit* [2]. Says St. Augustine, *sojourning* is a pilgrimage. He who dwells in a foreign land, not in his own country, is called a sojourner. St. Paul tells us the same: *Here we have no abiding city, but seek one to come* [3]. Heaven, says Bellarmine, is our true fatherland, and unhappy are they who are away from it; for the stateliest palaces of earthly monarchs, in comparison with the Golden City, are but as the rough tents of the wandering Arabs. *Long a sojourner.* And yet three-score and ten is no very long sojourn as time goes; but it is very long, and very weary, and full of sorrow to those who regard themselves, and sigh after the Life without end given us in our Fatherland [4].

(6) *Cum his qui odérunt pacem eram pacificus: cum loquébar illis impugnábant me gratis.*

With them that hate peace I was peaceful: when I spoke unto them that assailed me without cause.

St. Augustine observes that we have here the voice of the Church protesting against any unwise attempts to narrow her limits, to break her unity, to rend her fellowship, on the ground that within her pale are found many whose lives are in contradiction to her teaching. Says St. Prosper: It is a

[1] Phil. i. 2.

[2] Rom. viii. 9.

[3] Heb. xiii. 14.

[4] Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in Patria.

—St. Thomas Aquinas.

part of Christian perfection to be peaceful, even with *them that hate peace*, in the hope of amending them, not through assent to their evil ways. The deepest sense is, with the Carmelite, to take these words of our Divine Lord. For three and thirty years He was in the midst of men who hated *peace*. He is the Prince of *Peace*; and when He spoke to carnal Israel, as man never spoke before, they tried to cast Him headlong, then to stone Him, and at last cried out: *Away with Him! Away with Him! Crucify Him!* [1] Not less does the earlier part tell us of Him Who cried out to His Father all night in prayer, and in the Garden, and on the Cross; and Who was heard and raised again and exalted.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who hears us in the day of trouble. Glory to the Son Who is Peace. Glory to the Holy Ghost Who comforts us in our sojourning with Cedar.

PSALM CXX.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ unsleeping overshadows and guards Jerusalem. The voice of the Church to the Apostles. The voice of the Church to Christ concerning the Prophets or the peoples.

Venerable Bede: At the first step (of the Gradual Psalms) the Prophet, yet in trouble, sought that he might be delivered from unrighteous lips and a deceitful tongue. But now taking breath on the second step he lifted up his eyes unto the hills, that is, to the interceding saints, by whose prayers he hoped to attain heavenly gifts. The Prophet ascending to the heavenly Jerusalem in the first clause says he has lifted up his eyes to the merits of the saints, that he might be helped by their prayers, lest his soul should give way to the attack of the enemy. In the second place he promises himself what he knows to be asked for fittingly, teaching us that the good we

[1] John xix. 15.

pray for with a steady heart we are to believe without doubt will be given us.

(1) *Levavi oculos meos in montes : unde veniet auxilium mihi.*

I have lifted mine eyes to the mountains : whence cometh help to me.

(2) *Auxilium meum a Domino : qui fecit cælum et terram.*

My help is from the Lord : Who made heaven and earth.

This Psalm, as already noted, is a song for the pilgrims to Jerusalem, as they lift their eyes from the plains of Babylon to the mountain ranges which gird their native land, and to that Mount Sion, the holy spot where dwelt the Presence of the Lord. What are these *mountains*? *The mountains in which the Lord is pleased to dwell* [1]; *the fat mountains, the curdled mountains* [2], which are the saints. They are our intercessors; but the *help* that comes in answer to our prayers is a *help from the Lord*. Our hope in the saints is only a hope of intercession. The Lord, Himself, is the Mountain of mountains, from Whom alone comes the light which shines on those lofty summits, dark without Him, the true Light enlightening every man that cometh into the world. St. Hilary says that the *mountains* are the two Testaments with their lofty and difficult secrets admirably fitted to raise the soul from earth, and full of rich veins of spiritual wealth. St. Augustine takes the *mountains* as the Apostles, and explains that by means of their preaching of the word of God *help* did come from them on whom the light of heaven shone forth to those in the valley below. He made those Apostles heavens themselves whence the refreshing rains of doctrine came down upon the parched and sterile earth of the Gentile world below, as St. Bruno remarks.

(3) *Non det in commotionem pedem tuum : neque dormitet Qui custodit te.*

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved : and He that keepeth thee will not sleep.

(4) *Ecce non dormitabit, neque dormiet : Qui custodit Israel.*

Behold He that watches over Israel : slumbers not, nor sleeps.

As the *foot* is that member of the body which carries it about to the scenes of its actions, so its spiritual meaning is the motion and advances of the mind. Pride was the motion of the soul which drove Lucifer from heaven and Man from Paradise. God keeps the *foot* of His saints safe from this, but gives them the motion of love; that instead of falling, they may walk, advance, and go up in the right way. Thus St. Augustine. The Carmelite points out that He so kept the foot of His Apostles that no toils or terrors might daunt them from preaching the Gospel in all lands.

He that keepeth thee will not sleep. This probably in the literal sense refers to the night-watch round about the pilgrims on their way to the Holy City. In the mystical sense God does not slumber as one fatigued, nor sleep as needing repose. It is necessary, says St. Bernard, that He Who keepeth Israel should neither slumber nor sleep, for he who assails Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. And as the first seeks our safety, so the other desires to slay and destroy us, and his only care is that the man once turned aside may never come back. There is, remarks the Carthusian, a stress on *Israel*, to whom alone this unceasing ward is given; teaching us thereby that it is he *who sees God*, and wrestles with Him in prayer, who may surely look for His protection. Other commentators, in a beautiful sense, take the verse of the Resurrection. Jesus, the true Keeper of Israel, did indeed sleep in the grave, according to His human nature. But the ever-wakeful God-head slumbered not, but kept the watch over Israel, which, in those hours of desolation, was only to be found in Mary's heart. Others take this verse of the religious orders who, by the Office, never cease, as a body, their watch over the Christian Israel, according to the words of Isaias: *I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, who shall never hold their peace day and night* [1].

(5) *Dóminus custódit te,
Dóminus prótectio tua : super
manum dexteram tuam.*

*The Lord guards thee, the
Lord is thy protection : upon
thy right hand.*

(6) *Per diem sol non uret
te : neque luna per noctem.*

*The sun shall not burn thee
by day : nor the moon by night.*

Right hand means, according to the geographical sense of the term in the Old Testament, the south, the quarter from which the burning rays of the mid-day sun pour forth their pitiless heat and glare. In the mystical sense St. Hilary takes the words to refer to God's strengthening our power of action, and therefore of resistance in spiritual combat; or, with St. Augustine, we may take them as meaning the gift of eternal life denoted by the *right hand*; while the left hand holds only temporal bounties. The obvious literal sense of the reference to the *sun* and *moon* is that of sunstroke and moonstroke to which the pilgrims were exposed. But St. Augustine tells us that the *Sun* is Christ's Godhead; the *Moon* the Church, deriving all its light from Him and waxing and waning here; while the *night* is the Flesh of Christ wherein the *Sun* is hid and the *moon* shines, because faith in the Incarnation is the very life and meaning of the Church. The contemplation of these mysteries *shall not burn* us away with their awful glory, but rather strengthen and quicken us to live in accordance with God's gracious mercy towards us.

(7) <i>Dóminus custódit te ab omni malo : custódiat ánimam tuam Dóminus.</i>	<i>The Lord shall guard thee from all evil : the Lord shall guard thy soul.</i>
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It is no promise, says St. Hilary, of warding off the common evil of the body, for these are no real evils. It is the *soul* the Lord will guard, that the moth of evil may not enter in, the thief creep not upon it, the wolf not tear it, the bear not rage against it, the leopard not spring upon it, the tiger not fly at it, the lion not destroy it. For all these in this life are instruments of the evil one who employs cruel beasts to eat away the soul with sin, to creep upon it with flattery, to tear it with allurements, to spring upon it with ambition, to fly upon it with lusts, to destroy it with all his power. It is against such evils as these that we can look to God for protection. Thus it was, as St. Augustine says, God kept the souls of His martyrs safe while suffering their bodies to be the prey of the persecutor. God's ways of keeping are fourfold : as a Watchman seeing that no enemies approach the city He guards; as a Defender standing on the right hand; as a Porter opening

the gates of mercy ; as a Physician tending and binding up the wounds of a sufferer. Thus Cardinal Hugo.

(8) *Dóminus custódiat introítum tuum, et exitum tuum : ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.*

May the Lord preserve thy coming in and thy going out : from this time forth and for ever.

God keeps the *goings out* from sin of His servants and also keeps their *comings in* to the Land of Promise. Taking these words as they are in the verse, St. Augustine tells us that *coming in* is entering into the Church Militant, *going out* returning from it into the Church Triumphant : and God keeps our *coming in* when He takes care that we are not exposed to temptations too powerful for us to overcome ; and our *going out* by granting us perseverance and means of escape. Or, He keeps the first beginnings of our yet weak faith when we are entering into a knowledge of Him ; and preserves it to its close, that at our *going out* we may die as true subjects of His in the confession of His Name. Thus St. Bruno.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who made heaven and earth. Glory to the Son, the Watcher Who slumbers not nor sleeps. Glory to the Holy Ghost from Whom is all our help.

PSALM CXXI.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ sitteth and makes seats for sitting in judgment. The voice of the Church to the Apostles. The voice of Christ to the Church.

Venerable Bede : Another step higher up. The Prophet is lifted to the third degree, reaching higher than the second, and is declared to have made a beginning of the Psalm in his very gladness. He rejoices that he has been counselled to come to the heavenly Jerusalem, where the saints abide ever now in sure prosperity and shall judge together with the Lord. He then

speaks to the citizens of Jerusalem concerning their abundant peace.

(1) <i>Lætatus sum in his quæ dicta sũnt mihi : in Domum Dómini ibimus.</i>	<i>I rejoiced in those things which were said unto me : we will go into the House of the Lord.</i>
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Who have said *these things*? The Prophets who foretold the return from Captivity, and in that figure, the return to the heavenly Jerusalem. And again, who are the *we* who speak? The Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity speaking to us by the Prophets and Apostles, and saying not *Go*, but *We will go* and be your Guides and Companions on the road to that House which admits the righteous only. In that They say it to *me*, the unity of the Church, the individuality of the promises, is denoted. In that it is added, *we will go*—the multitude of them that are of one heart and mind is shown forth. There are four Houses of God into which the faithful soul goes. First, the Church Militant; then the inner House of Conscience; then the House of Suffering; and lastly, the House of Heaven in which there are many mansions. How are we to *go*? On the two feet of charity, answers a saint, Love of God and Love of our neighbour. Richard of St. Victor takes this verse in an allegorical sense as referring to our first parents rejoicing in the hopes of regaining Paradise. It is said *we will go* because neither the hand alone nor the heart suffice for that journey. Adam does not desire to enter without Eve, for Knowledge without Love is unprofitable; it is altogether impossible for Eve to enter without Adam, for if we knew nothing of Divine things we shall not love them at all. And lastly, it is taken of the gladness of the saints at entering into their rest through the gate of Death.

(2) <i>Stantes erant pedes nostri : in átriis tuis Jerúsalem.</i>	<i>Our feet were standing : in thy courts O Jerusalem.</i>
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The Carthusian says : The very sign and cause of our hope that we shall *go* into the House of the Lord is that *our feet* are even now *standing* within the gates of Jerusalem, that is, in God's Holy Church where our desires and contemplations are fixed and set on the mansions above, because *our conversation*

is in heaven [1]. He stands there who delights himself in God: and he whose delight is in himself cannot stand, but must, as Lucifer, fall through his pride. Thus St. Augustine. The oratory, the choir, are the very *courts of Jerusalem*; for there we gain that peace of which that City is the Vision.

(3) *Ferusalem quæ ædificatur ut civitas: cujus participatio ejus in idipsum.*

Jerusalem which is built as a city: which is at unity with itself.

St. Hilary points out that the Psalmist, referring to the temporal city, does not say that it is a *city*, but only that it is *built as a city*; because it is, at the best, but a faint and shadowy type of the true *Jerusalem*, the City Eternal made without hands. This heavenly City is being built now, of living stones; and it is a true City, for its inhabitants are united together and share in *unity with Him* Who is no other than Jesus Christ, by Whose merits they become citizens of heaven, and Whose Headship they all acknowledge. The heavenly *Jerusalem* has points of resemblance to an earthly city; its many mansions [2]; its unity of law, love; its one king, Jesus; its fountain, Mary; its twelve gates, the Apostles [3]; its citizens, the angels and saints; its walls and bulwarks, salvation.

(4) *Illuc enim ascenderunt tribus, tribus Domini; testimonium Israel ad confitendum Nómini Dómini.*

For thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord: the testimony unto Israel to praise the Name of the Lord.

In the Law it was ordered that all males three times a year should present themselves before the Lord [4] to attest their loyalty to Him and to claim the privilege of the Covenant [5]. It is not said the tribes of Israel but the *tribes of the Lord*; that is, the Gentiles; those who have come into the Church, not by inheritance. They are often by their earnestness and devotion, a *testimony unto Israel*. They *go up to Israel*; for *out of Sion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from*

[1] Phil. iii. 20.

[2] John xiv. 2.

[3] Apoc. xxi. 12.

[4] Exod. xxiii. 17.

[5] Deut. xvi. 16.

Jerusalem [1]. Their presence in Jerusalem is a witness of their obedience and an example given to others.

(5) *Quia illic sederunt sedes* *For there they have set*
in iudicio : sedes super domum *thrones of judgment, thrones*
David. *over the house of David.*

Here is the third glory of Jerusalem, says St. John Chrysostom. It is not merely stately and strong in beauty, the gathering-place of all the tribes, but it is also the seat of kingly power and justice. *Thrones* : for all manner of causes come before the judges, even the judging of the world. *Ye shall sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel* [2]. The apostolic *thrones are over the house of David* ; for his throne was an earthly one ; and theirs are set to judge angels [3] as well as men.

(6) *Rogáte quæ ad pacem* *O pray for the peace of*
sunt Jerúsalem : et abundántia *Jerusalem : and plenteousness*
diligéntibus te. *to them that love thee.*

(7) *Fiat pax in virtute tua :* *Peace be within thy strength :*
et abundántia in túrribus *and plenteousness within thy*
tuis. *towers.*

Jerusalem is not only a type of heaven ; it also, being the Vision of Peace and at unity with itself, is a type of the Church. In this verse a prayer is made for *peace* in our days. For although the Church must always be prepared for battle, and lives in an armed truce, *peace* is necessary for her development and for the legitimate exercise of her influence. *Peace* is secured by attending to the *strength* of the walls and to the abundance of provisions for its citizens. The first secures it from without ; and the second from want within. The Church's walls are Faith, Hope, and Charity ; and in her sacraments she has provision enough for all the children of men. And that the faithful may enjoy to the full these benefits, she wants *peace*. St. Bernard takes the *strength* to be the Passion of our Lord ; and the *towers* the height of heavenly grace and glory attained by those who love Him.

(8) *Propter fratres meos et* *For my brethren and com-*
próximos meos : loquēbar pa- *panions' sakes, I will speak*
cem de te. *peace of thee.*

[1] Is. ii. 3.

[2] Matt. xix. 28.

[3] 1 Cor. vi. 3.

There are two senses in which we may take this verse : because all thy citizens are *my brethren*, or because *my brethren* now in exile are to be brought home. One, for it gives us the rejoicing sense of fellowship in the communion of saints ; the other, the eager yearning of all devout souls for those who have gone astray. Some commentators take these words as those of Christ Himself promising present blessings and future glory to the Church on earth, *for both He that sanctified and they who are sanctified are all of one : for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren* [1].

(9) *Propter donum Dómini
Dei nostri : quæstvi bona tibi.*

*Yea, because of the House of
the Lord our God, I have sought
good things to thee.*

We must carry good-will with action ; first that of earnest prayer that God may grant His City all desirable blessings, and next diligently seeking out all good things to increase the power and wealth of that City. *Good things* ; all that can tend to the increase of God's Church. Souls, above all ; for they are the future citizens of heaven : virtue and merit in our own soul ; for that increases the wealth and attractiveness of the Church. We should have put the last first ; for the surest way of converting others is first of all to convert oneself. A man who is set upon self-conversion will do far greater work in secretly influencing souls in a practical, healthy way, than one who deliberately sets himself out to gain converts. The real work is done by example, not by word.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father the Builder of the heavenly Jerusalem. Glory to the Son in Whom the citizens are all at unity. Glory to the Holy Ghost Who has told us that we shall go into the House of the Lord.

[1] Heb. ii. 11.

LITTLE CHAPTER [1].

*Et sic in Sion firmata sum
et in civitate sanctificata simi-
liter requievi, et in Jerusalem
potestas mea.*

R. Deo gratias.

*V. Diffusa est gratia in
labiis tuis.*

*R. Propterea benedixit te
Deus in ætérnum.*

*And so was I strengthened
in Sion, and likewise in the
holy City did I rest, and in
Jerusalem was my power.*

R. Thanks be to God.

*V. Grace is poured forth
on thy lips.*

*R. Therefore hath God
blessed thee for ever.*

The words of the Little Chapter direct our minds to Mary, of whom all these Psalms speak. She who was so peaceful and yet suffered ; who dwelt so high on the holy mountain, and watched over Israel's God ; She who was the New Jerusalem in which the King dwelt and whose unity was in Him ; She is given a place in the Church which is strong like the Rock on which it is built. She has been set as the Mother of the Church ; through her cometh the help we look for from the Lord ; for in heaven, where her power is, she reigns as Queen of Angels and Saints. The thought of the powerful advocate we have makes us say a fervent thanksgiving to God Who has so blessed her on account of the grace that is in her. The *Myroure* says on this Little Chapter : " These words are read both of our Lord Jesus Christ and also of our Lady ; for by her we have Him. Here are named three places : *Sion, City, and Jerusalem*. By *Sion*, that is as much as to say ' beholding,' is understood souls that are given to contemplation wherein our Lord Jesus Christ is surely stablished, for they are not troubled about many things as others are. By the hallowed *City* is understood souls given to active life wherein our Lord Jesus Christ resteth by charity that they have to their fellow-Christians. For *City* is as much as to say one body of citizens, and it is said ' hallowed ' by the pureness of intention that they offer to God in all their works. By *Jerusalem* is understood prelates and governors that have power and care upon both contemplative and active life ; and

therefore their life is called the mixed life, as being a mean between action and contemplation, having part with both. For they ought to see that both be kept in peace, according to their calling; and therefore they are understood by *Jerusalem*, that is as much as to say, the 'sight of peace'; for they ought to have sight of wisdom and of discretion to know how to keep peace with all parties. And to that end He hath shared with them His own power; and therefore He saith: *And in Jerusalem is my power* [1]."

For a fuller treatment of the Versicle and Response see the first Psalm of the Second Nocturn, third verse.

COLLECT.

Deus qui salutis æternæ, beatæ Mariæ virginitate fecunda, humano generi præmia præstitisti: tribue quæsumus, ut ipsam pro nobis intercedere sentiâmus, per quam meruimus Auctorem vitæ suscipere, Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum Filium Tuum: Qui Tecum, &c.

O God Who by the Fruitful Virginity of the blessed virgin Mary hath given to the human race the rewards of eternal salvation: grant we beseech Thee that we may experience the intercession of her through whom we merited to receive the Author of Life, our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son: &c.

As usual, the Collect sums up all the thoughts of the whole hour and unites those of Jesus and Mary in the full expression of them all. The Author of Life of Whom speak the Psalms; His Mother, the type of the Christian soul. We get all the goods of eternal life through her divine Motherhood; for in giving us Jesus she has given us Life itself.

During Advent.

The Antiphon (second), Little Chapter, and Prayer are the same as are said at Lauds during this season; the Versicle as above.

During Christmas-tide.

The Antiphon (second), and Prayer are as at Lauds during this season; the Little Chapter and Versicle as above. The thought of the Mother by the side of the Crib gives another turning to the idea of the Little Chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

AT SEXT : THE SIXTH HOUR.

After the same introductory Prayers, Hymn and Antiphon (the third of Lauds according to the season), the Psalmody begins and three more of the Gradual Psalms are said.

PSALM CXXII.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ having pity on us may deliver us from the contempt of the proud. The voice of Christ to the Father, or of the Church to Christ. The first step is faith, the second hope, and the third charity ; and now here the fourth declares the perseverance of him that prayeth.

Venerable Bede : He who previously lifted his eyes to the hills now raiseth his heart to the Lord Himself. He first engages in persevering prayers that he may retain the gifts he has acquired by the Royal bounty. In the second he makes supplication.

(1) *Ad te levávi óculos meos :
qui hábitas in cælis.*

*Unto Thee I lift up min
eyes : O Thou that dwellest in
the heavens.*

There is a great advance made in this Psalm, says St. Hilary, since, from merely lifting up the eyes unto the hills, the singer raises them to God Himself Who is to be found everywhere. The Carmelite tells us that the *eyes* are the contemplative and the active life ; the first to learn His will, the second to do it. As *the heavens* are above the earth so is the success we seek from God above anything this earth can give.

(2) *Ecce sicut óculi servórum : in mánibus dominórum suórum.*

Behold, even as the eyes of servants : look unto the hands of their masters.

(3) *Sicut óculi ancillæ in mánibus dómínæ suæ : ita óculi nostri ad Dóminum Deum nostrum donec miserédatur nostri.*

As the eyes of a maiden unto the hands of her mistress : even so our eyes wait on the Lord God until He have mercy on us.

Servants look for the slightest gesture which indicates their master's will ; they also look to their master's hand for reward and punishment. Why are men-servants and women-servants mentioned ? That the share of both sexes in the duties and rewards of faithful service may be asserted ; then to teach that the strong and the weak are alike called to bring forth good works. And *servants* are spoken of in the plural, and *handmaiden* in the singular. The reason of this, says Cardinal Hugo, is to teach us that all the various mighty nations of the world, with all their masculine vigour, are to be united in that one Church which is the *maiden* before being the Bride of the Lamb.

Until He have mercy on us. This does not mean that we are to cease looking unto Him when He has shown us His pity. If we always keep our look upon His Face we will see His image there and we shall be like Him ; for we shall see Him as He is, and behold our own likeness in His glorious Face [1]. Even here on earth we may look to His *hand*, by seeking to know His Will through careful and assiduous study of the Holy Scriptures He has given for our learning, that guiding our conduct thereby we may please Him and obtain His mercy. Thus St. Gregory the Great.

(4) *Miserére nostri Dómine, miserére nostri : quia multum repléti sumus despectiónè.*

Have mercy upon us O Lord, have mercy upon us : for we are filled exceedingly with scorn.

(5) *Quia multum repléta est ánima nostra : oppróbrium abundantibus, et despéctio supérbis.*

Our soul is exceeding filled : opprobrium from the rich and despiteness from the proud.

The Apostles after the triumph of the Resurrection looked for a speedy restoration of the kingdom of Israel; yet almost their first experience after Pentecost was the imprisonment and scourging of two of their number, and their later history one of them describes as *being made a spectacle unto the world and Angels, made as the refuse of the world, and the off-scouring of all, even until now* [1]. And in the Church to-day Holy Poverty meets with the scornful rebuke of the rich, and Obedience with the contempt of the proud. It is when the world treats our lives as folly that we turn with greater confidence to our Master Whose bounteous hand is never closed to us, Whose aid is always nigh.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who dwelleth in heaven; Glory to the Son the Hand of the Lord; Glory to the Holy Ghost Who comforts the despired.

PSALM CXXIII.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ, breaking the snare of death, delivered us by the help of His Name. The voice of the Apostles and of all believers. Here is the fifth step. The voice of the Apostles concerning the ungodly Jew and unbelievers who walk in sin.

Venerable Bede: The fifth step is gratitude. The saints, remembering how many perils like a rushing torrent they have escaped through the Mercy of God at the very begining, confess their deliverance ever the work of God. They then give thanks that they have not been deceived by their persecutors but have been rescued from their broken snares.

(1) <i>Nisi quia Dóminus erat</i>	<i>Unless the Lord had been in</i>
<i>in nobis, dicat nunc Israel:</i>	<i>us, now may Israel say: unless</i>
<i>nisi quia Dominus erat in</i>	<i>the Lórd had been in us,</i>
<i>nobis.</i>	

(2) *Cum exsúrgerent hóm-
ines in nos : forte vivos deglu-
tissent nos.*

*When men arose against us :
perchance they would have
swallowed us up.*

In us. This is something more than being at our side : *Thou, O Lord, art in us . . . forsake us not O Lord our God,* says Jeremias [1]. When God is the possessor and inhabitant of our heart, then, and then only, are we safe from any foe. *In us* as a Pilot of a storm-tossed ship ; *in us* as a Captain of an army in battle ; *in us* as Head and Heart to the body, directing its thoughts and affections. And it is said *in us* and not *in me* ; because as the pilgrims go up they sing at times one by one, and at other times in chorus ; because the many are one, since Christ is one, and the members of Christ are one in Him.

They had swallowed us up alive, that is, although wicked men can destroy the life of the body, the soul passes *alive* and scathless through the torments on to the reward.

(3) *Cum irascerétur furor
eórum in nos : fòrsitan aqua
absorbuisset nos.*

*When their fury was en-
kindled against us : perchance
the water had drowned us.*

(4) *Torrentem pertransivít
ánima nostra : fòrsitan per-
transisset ánima nostra aquam
intolerábilem.*

*Our soul hath passed
through the torrent : perchance
our soul would have had to
pass through water unbear-
able.*

In the midst of the danger God is with us, even when the torrent threatens destruction, according to the words of the Prophet : *When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee : and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee* [2]. As used in Scripture *waters* stand for nations which pass away ; but the Rock in the midst remains unmoved. As it was with the persecutions the nations raised against the Church, so it was with the persecutors. And though the torrent submerged many, yet the Church emerged safely, and therefore it follows :—

[1] xiv. 9.

[2] Is. xliii. 2.

(5) *Benedictus Dóminus :* *Blessed be the Lord : Who*
qui non dedit nos in captiónem *hath not given us over for a*
déntibus eórum. *prey to their teeth.*

The devil, the roaring lion seeking whom he may devour [1], has allies and instruments among men, of whom it is written : *There is a generation whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as knives to devour the poor from off the earth and the needy from among men* [2]. *These bite and devour one another* [3], and the saints, too, with slander and detraction ; and endeavour to make their prey as evil as themselves by incorporating them with their own body. Thus St. Bruno.

(6) *Anima nostra sicut* *Our soul is escaped as a*
passer erépta est : de láqueo *sparrow : out of the fowler's*
venántium. *net.*

(7) *Láqueus contrítus est :* *The snare is broken : and*
et nos liberáti sumus. *we are delivered.*

A snare, says St. Augustine, needs to be baited ; and the devil's bait for the souls of men is usually the pleasure of life. He hides it, says the Carmelite, in some unsuspected place ; not on the highway, where it soon may be detected and destroyed, but in some place near to it. He masks it carefully, and puts ease, wealth, self-indulgence, over it to tempt us. God cries aloud to us with His warnings and threats, lest we should give way to the tempter. If we do not listen, but fall into the snare, how can we save ourselves ? What is more helpless than a bird once entangled in the net ? It is said : *The snare is broken.* When ? When Christ broke the power of Satan. Why fearest thou ? Knowest thou not Who is thy Helper ? Yes, answer Christ's true soldiers, we know well. It is not our own strength or skill which has saved us ; we have not broken the snare ourselves. Thus St. Ambrose.

(8) *Adjutórium nostrum in* *Our help is in the Name of*
nómine Dómini : qui fecit cæ- *the Lord : Who hath made*
lum et terram. *both heaven and earth.*

[1] 1 Pet. v. 8.

[2] Prov. xxx. 14.

[3] Gal. v. 15.

He hath made the *earth* whereon the snare is set: so that of right He can destroy that snare as laid unlawfully in His domain. He hath made the *heaven* for the souls He has delivered; so that they may fly upward, rejoicing. He Himself came down to *earth* that He might break the snare; He returned to *heaven* that we might *fly as doves to their windows* [1], following where He showed the way.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Maker of heaven and earth; Glory to the Son the Breaker of the snare; Glory to the Holy Ghost our abiding Guest.

PSALM CXXIV.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ may defend us with His help lest the rod, that is, the tyranny of sin, should be upon us. The voice of the Church. This is the sixth step of them that hold out and are unmoved amidst their suffering, and in whom, stretching not out their hands to unrighteousness, the peace of Israel will abide.

Venerable Bede: In the sixth step the Prophet cries to us to put our trust in the Lord lest we labour in vain. He first makes the firm assertion that they who trust in the Lord can in no wise be moved; he then prays that prosperity may come to the good and vengeance to the bad.

(1) *Qui confidunt in Dómino, sicut mons Sion: non commovébitur in ætérnum qui hábitat in Jerúsalem.*

(2) *Montes in circúitu ejus: et Dóminus in circúitu pópuli sui ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.*

They that put their trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion: he shall not be moved who dwelleth in Jerusalem.

The mountains gird it round about: and the Lord is in the midst of His people from this time forth and for ever.

They who trust in the Lord, says St. Bruno of Aste, *shall be as Mount Sion*, that is, they shall have for their own use all the grace and strength stored up in the Church of God. Most of the commentators here go beyond the usual interpretation and take *Sion* to mean not so much the Church as the Divine Head thereof. So, *those who trust in the Lord* shall share in the strength of *the Rock, which is Christ*. While *he who dwelleth in Jerusalem*, or as St. Paul says, *whose conversation is in heaven* [1], shall never be moved; for the Church prays in one of the Collects "that where true joys are there may our hearts be fixed" (Fourth Sunday after Easter).

The hills are round about them. This they interpret as the Angels watching and defending as guardians the *Sion* of waiting souls on earth, compassing about the Heavenly City with their shining ranks. But, says St. Augustine, while these Angels of the Lord have the charge of those who put their trust in Him because they fear Him, as it is written: *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him* [2]; a stronger defender, a more blessed gift, is for them who truly dwell in Jerusalem, submitting themselves to all its laws, *for the Lord is round about His people*.

(3) *Quia non relinquet Dominus virgam peccatorum super sortem justorum: ut non extendant justi ad iniquitatem manus suas.*

For the Lord shall not leave the rod of the ungodly over the lot of the righteous: lest the righteous put their hands to iniquity.

For the *rod* we are to understand the sceptre of authority and power. Says St. Hilary: The Lord does not leave this rod in the hands of the ungodly; troubles come, but they do not last; persecutions come, but they do not continue; they may have mastery over the body, but never over our conscience. *The rod of the ungodly* is not left upon us if we turn to Him when we have been conquered and stretched forth our hands to sin; for *God is faithful and will not suffer us to be tried above our strength* [3]. Our suffering

at the hands of God's adversaries is brief and wins the reward of victory, albeit it involves no long toil of battle.

The lot of the righteous is the Church, which He does not permit to be continually afflicted, however He may chastise it for a time.

(4) *Bénéfac Domine bonis: Do well O Lord unto the et rectis corde. good: and to the true of heart.*

Good refers to external and godly behaviour; *true of heart*, to internal holiness. The conjunction *and* implies that real external goodness (such as will merit supernatural reward) cannot be found without internal sanctity, for the outward is only the expression of the inward. Deeds that seem good may be performed for worldly motives. But these God is not asked to reward, for He says: *Amen, I say to you they have their reward* [1] in the approval of men. But those deeds, really *good* because they are done by the righteous in heart, we do ask God to reward; and the reward He gives is grace here, and glory hereafter; or, in other words, Himself [2], *the reward exceeding great*.

(5) *Declinantes autem in obligationes adducet Dominus Such as turn aside unto cum operantibus iniquitatem: bonds the Lord shall lead forth pax super Israel. with the workers of iniquity: but peace shall be upon Israel.*

Turn aside, such as go out of the King's Highway and cease to obey; *bonds*, the sins in which they become entangled. Those who, under the pressure of the rod of the ungodly, stretch forth their hands to iniquity are here spoken of; that have put their conscience under bonds and have turned away from its dictates, and yet know the judgment of God, that who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same but consort with them that do the same [3]; their lot is with the *workers of iniquity*. But to *Israel*, to those who *see God* with unclouded conscience, there shall be *peace*; for a ruler, the *Prince of Peace* [4] is set over us. *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse* [5]; and *a Sceptre shall rise*

[1] Math. vi. 2.

[2] Gen. xv. 1.

[3] Rom. i. 32.

[4] Isaías ix. 6.

[5] Isaías xi. 1.

out of Israel [1]; and with this rod He shall feed His people Israel, the flock of His heritage; for *He is our Peace who hath made but one* [2], Jews and Gentiles alike, unto one Israel, even Jesus Christ our Lord. Thus St. Hilary.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father, the Lord Who is in the midst of His people. Glory to the Son the Peace upon Israel. Glory to the Holy Ghost Who doth well to the good and right of heart.

LITTLE CHAPTER [3].

Et radicavi in populo honorificato, et in parte Dei mei hereditas illius, et in plenitudine sanctorum detentio mea.

R. Deo gratias.

V. Benedicta tu in mulieribus.

. Et benedictus Fructus ventris tui.

And I took root in an honourable people, and in the Lot of the Lord was my inheritance; and my staying in the fulness of the saints.

Thanks be to God.

Blessed art thou amongst women.

And blessed is the Fruit of thy womb.

The sense of confidence and firmness which pervades the Psalms finds its echo in the Little Chapter. Here we get it concentrated, as it were, upon one object, our ever dear and blessed Lady. As the day goes on (it is now the office for mid-day) and worldly trials are surrounding us, and *the noon-day devil* [4] is roaring, we need a renewal of confidence; and the "valiant woman," Mary, that Mount Sion girt about with such mountains of grace, she who escaped from the snare of the fowler who sought to bring all under sin, she the Handmaid of the Lord who always kept her eyes fixed on Him, she, we are told, is a ground for sure confidence. For she has taken root, and is in the peaceful enjoyment of her *heritage*, and abides in heaven. All these are

[1] Num. xxiv., 17.

[2] Ephesians ii. 14.

[3] Eccle. xxiv. 2.

[4] Ps. xc. 6.

ideas of fixity. So confidence in her is reasonable; for she trusts in the Lord and is therefore immovable. Her special heritage is in the *Lot of the Lord*, that is, in those souls who have chosen Him for their part of the *heritage* and their cup. They are specially dear to her and feel above all others her protection. On this Little Chapter let us hear the author of the *Myroure*: "Christian people are honoured above all people in knowledge of right belief and in the sacrament of holy Church. And therefore in them our Lady is rooted by spiritual help and favour, namely, in such as seek their chief heritage in heaven and not on earth. Also, our Lady abideth in the fulness of saints, for there never was a saint on earth nor angel in heaven that was or is so full of virtues and graces, but that our Lady had and hath them all in more fulness and perfection than they. And therefore, says St. Bernard: Verily her abiding is in the fulness of saints, for she failed not in the faith of patriarchs, nor in the spirit of prophets, nor in the zeal of the apostles, nor in the steadfastness of martyrs, nor in the soberness of confessors, nor in the chastity of virgins, nor in the plenteousness of the wedded, nor in the purity of angels" [1].

These thoughts lend a peculiar significance to the *Deo gratias* and to the praise we give her as "Blessed among women."

COLLECT.

Concede miséricors Deus fragilitati nostræ præsidium: ut qui sanctæ Dei Genitricis memoriâ agimus, intercessionis ejus auxilio, a nostris iniquitatibus resurgamus. Per Eundem, &c.

Grant O merciful God help to our weakness: that we who venerate the Holy Mother of God, may, by the help of her intercession, rise up from our sins. Through the same Jesus Christ, &c.

The prayer sums up the thoughts of the whole Office. We ask of God that we may in very truth feel the protection of her in whom we have been led to trust. Her protection serves only to one end, that we may rise out of sin. All is based on

that. At the Marriage Feast of Cana she took pity on the temporal need of her hosts and interceded with her Son ; but it was on the condition that *Whatsoever He tells you to do, that do ye* [1]. So it is with us. She helps us in all things, but for one end only : to get us to do the Divine Will and avoid sin.

During Advent.

The Antiphon and Collect is from Lauds according to the season ; the Versicle is as above.

LITTLE CHAPTER [2].

*Dabit Illi Dóminus Deus
sedem David patris Ejus : et
regnabit in domo Jacob in
æternum, et regni Ejus non
erit finis.*

*The Lord God shall give
Him the throne of David His
father, and He shall reign in
the house of Jacob for ever :
and of His Kingdom there
shall be no end.*

The spirit of confidence which runs through the Psalms is strengthened here by the thought of the everlasting Kingship of Him Who comes to strengthen us and in Whose grace we can do all things. The last words, used in the *Credo* at Mass, are a promise of the Eternal Glory of the Kingdom we are invited to share. St. Teresa never heard these words either in the Office or the Mass without a special thrill of exultation. And in that Eternal Kingdom who is it that stands at the side of the King but the Queen, the "cause of our joy" and "our hope?" So the thought of our Lord, Who alone is our refuge and confidence, does not take away our trust in Mary ; for she is but His instrument and the dealer of His good gifts to men.

During Christmas-tide.

The Antiphon and Prayer are from Lauds ; the Little Chapter and Versicle is the Common.

[1] John ii. 5.

[2] Luke i. 32, 33.

CHAPTER VII

AT NONE : THE NINTH HOUR.

After the introductory Prayers, Versicle, Hymn and Antiphon, the recital of the Gradual Psalms is continued.

PSALM CXXV.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Tomasi : That Christ may fill us with joy of eternal gladness. The voice of the Apostles to the Lord concerning the ungodly Jews. This, the seventh step, contains the consolation of the martyrs who, sowing in tears here for a time, shall reap eternal joys.

Venerable Bede : After captivity to sin, sweet is the ascent to the New Jerusalem. Delivered by the Divine pity the blessed souls in the first part of this Psalm give thanks for the grace which came after so much sin ; and in the second pray that future joy may crown their work of tears.

(1) *In converténdo Dóminus captivitatem Sion : facti sumus sicut consoláti.*

When the Lord turned the captivity of Sion : then were we made like men comforted.

Jerusalem above is free in the bliss of the angels ; but *Sion* here below is captive in the sins of men. *When the Lord turned its captivity* by proclaiming the forgiveness of sins, then were we *as men comforted*. Not altogether *comforted*, but only like it ; because comfort implies sorrow and tears which belong to our exile here and are not to be wiped away till we are again at home. Thus St. Augustine. In another sense the word is taken as telling of the wondering and hesitating joy of the Apostles in the Resurrection, when Christ had indeed

turned the captivity of Sion, by His descent into hell bringing the waiting Patriarchs away with Him into the joy of Paradise, and still more when He ascended on high, leading Captivity captive. The Carthusian refers it to the coming of each ransomed soul out of the spiritual Babylon of sin, into the grace and glorious liberty of the children of God. In the word *comforted* we may see a reference to the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, Who acts as our Sanctifier in the sacraments and turns away the captivity of sin.

(2) <i>Tunc replétum est gaudio os nostrum : et lingua nostra exultatione.</i>	<i>Then shall our mouth be filled with joy : and our tongue with exultation.</i>
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Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh [1], says our Lord ; and where the Holy Ghost dwells and rules there will be Liberty and the fruits of His presence. Now, according to St. Paul, the second of these fruits is *joy* [2] which is an inward consolation and gladness which comes to those souls who are united to God's will. Spiritual *joy* does not impede earthly sorrow, which comes from external objects. Our Lady at the foot of the Cross, although stricken with sorrow greater than any other creature bore, never lost her interior *joy* or allowed her will to swerve for a moment from its conformity to God's. It is this spirit of *joy* which is the secret of the happiness and light-heartedness of those who are really trying to serve God. Gloom and low spirits do not come from God. They show that something in ourself is at fault.

(3) <i>Tunc dicent inter gentes : Magnificavit Dóminus facere cum eis.</i>	<i>Then shall they say among the heathen : The Lord hath done great things for them.</i>
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(4) <i>Magnificavit Dóminus facere nobiscum : facti sumus lætantes.</i>	<i>Yea, the Lord hath done great things for us : we have become men rejoicing.</i>
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The return from the seventy years Captivity struck, indeed, the Gentiles as a wonder ; but as St. Augustine says, the future *shall they say* implies what will yet come to pass : for

[1] Luke vi. 45.

[2] Gal. v. 22.

neither at the first, nor at the Lord's Coming, nor in time to come, did or will all Gentiles accept the truth, but only certain among them who were moved by the holiness and works of His people.

Great things; not only as the Carmelite says, the miracles and preaching of the Apostles and the endurance of the Martyrs; but, as St. Bruno says, the obedience of body and soul to God, the heavenly conversation of those who truly turn to Him. Not only do these start the admiration of the Gentiles, but we ourselves, comparing our state in captivity with that under the Law of Liberty, are filled with astonishment and confess that the work is entirely God's, and contrary at once to our deservings and expectations. Thus Bellarmine. Gerohus makes a beautiful application of these last words by applying them to the souls in Purgatory and the saints above. These last without us, cannot be entirely perfect, and therefore follows:—

(5) *Convérte Dómine captivitátem nostram : sicut torrens in Austro.*

Turn our captivity, O Lord : as a river in the south wind.

The primary sense shows that this Psalm was composed during the first migration after the decree of Cyrus, and that the first colony of the Jews, now safe at Jerusalem, pray that their brethren still in exile may be soon united to them. So in the mystical sense the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, together with us who are still exiles in the Babylon of this world, pray for our deliverance out of bondage and for the conversion of unbelievers.

As a river in the south wind. As a river frozen under the icy blasts of the north wind is set free by the genial warmth of the southern breeze and pours fourth in a torrent, so here we get the idea of captivity broken, of sorrow turned into joy. This *south wind*, says St. Augustine, is the Holy Spirit Himself, of Whom it is written in the Canticles : *Come Thou South Wind and blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow* [1]. And again : *He bloweth with His Wind and the waters*

flow [1]. What that means we learn in Ecclesiasticus : *Thy sins also shall melt away, as the ice in the fire and in the fair weather* [2]. Where shall the torrent flow? All rivers run to the sea ; and therefore our cry to the Lord when He has stirred us from our wintry sleep is : Direct the channel of our waters in the one true course.

(6) *Qui séminant in lácrymis : in exsultatione metent.*

They that sow in tears : shall reap in joy.

(7) *Eúntes ibant et flebant : mitténtes sémina sua.*

Going forth they went their way weeping : casting their seeds.

(8) *Veniéntes autem vénient cum exsultatione : portántes manípulos suos.*

But returning they shall come back with joy : bearing their sheaves.

There are two sowings, says the Apostle : one in the spirit, and one in the flesh. Each man shall reap as he has sown : of the flesh, corruption ; of the spirit, life everlasting [3]. Our Lord has taught us, *Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice ; ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall turn into joy* [4]. Before Christ's coming, says Father Corder, the Jesuit, before He consecrated weeping by His own strong crying and tears, nothing but salt drops of bitter water flowed from the eyes of men, but now they are costly pearls, dear and precious in God's sight. Our tears are fivefold, says St. Augustine : tears of penance, tears of the fear of judgment, tears of weariness of exile, tears of compassion for others, tears of desire for heaven. St. Bernard in his sermon on St. Benedict says : O race of Adam, how many have been sowing in thee and what precious seed ! How terribly must they perish and how deservingly if such seed and the toil of the sowers at the same time should perish in thee. The whole Trinity sowed in our land, the Angels and Apostles sowed together, the Martyrs, Confessors and Virgins sowed too. The Father sowed Bread from heaven ; the Son, Truth ; the Holy Ghost, Charity. The Apostles went forth and wept, casting their seeds, but coming again they shall come with

[1] Ps. cxlvii. 7.

[2] iii. 15.

[3] Cf. Gal. vi. 8.

[4] John xvi. 20.

great joy bearing their sheaves. Two are the sheaves which thou seekest—honour and rest. They who sow and toil in lowliness shall reap honour and rest together. The Carmelite, with most commentators, refers the verse to the abundant reward and gladness of the righteous in the manifestation of the Son of Man, when the Sower, Who sowed the goodly seed of His Word in the field of this world, triumphs finally over the secret enemy who sowed the tares. In that day, the glad harvest time, *the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Sion; and everlasting joy shall be upon their head: they shall obtain gladness and joy: and sorrow and mourning shall flee away* [1]. We are to expect the fruit of our labour when God calls to the harvest home, not before. Ours is to work and to work for Him. The result is in His hands; and He will draw the profit out of our labour when and how He pleases. *Cast thy bread upon the running waters; thou shalt find it after many days* [2]; for, *We know in Whom we trust* [3].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who turneth the Captivity of Sion. Glory to the Son the Sower of good seed. Glory to the Holy Ghost the Joy of the ransomed people of God.

PSALM CXXVI.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi: That Christ may build up what is good in us, and does build it up unto Himself. The voice of Christ to the coming Church. The voice of the Church to the faithful.

Venerable Bede: The Prophet rejoicing in having foreseen by the Spirit the grace of the New Testament, teaches at the beginning (lest any hurtful presumptuousness because of so great a gift should seize thee) that no one should ascribe any good results to his own powers, since all things are placed under God's authority, nor desire to outrun the time appointed by the ordinances of the Lord.

[1] Is. li. 11.

[2] Eccles. xi. 1.

[3] 2 Tim. i. 12.

(1) <i>Nisi Dóminus ædificaverit domum : in vanum laboraverunt qui ædificant eam.</i>	<i>Unless the Lord hath built the house : they labour in vain who build it.</i>
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They who built the Tower of Babel built in vain. The true *House* of the Lord, says St. Hilary, is that Temple of God which is made up of ourselves, as living stones, wherein the Spirit is pleased to dwell. No human skill can rear it, nor is it planned by worldly art. It is not built upon the earth nor on the shifting sand. Its foundation is laid upon the apostles and prophets, *Jesus Christ being Himself the Corner-stone* [1]. The whole building is the work of God, although under Him skilled workmen have laboured ; and *not in vain*, for He was with them. The Lord has come to us. He has ransomed us from captivity and the *House* and the *City* are being built up : but they who go up thither must know that He alone is Builder and Keeper : *Neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God Who giveth the increase* [2]. No man can build up by his own unaided power even the single dwelling of his conscience ; for, as St. Gregory says, God pulls down the human heart when He leaves it, and builds it up when He fills it. It is not by making war against the mind of man that He destroys it, but by leaving it ; and when this is so and sin has dominion, the heart of a hearer is vainly counselled, because every mouth is dumb if He does not cry aloud in the heart.

(2) <i>Nisi Dóminus custodierit civitatem : frustra vigilat qui custodit eam.</i>	<i>Unless the Lord keep the city : in vain doth he watch who guards it.</i>
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Building, no matter how solid or lofty, is not sufficient for the protection of the house or city ; and what is even more important, that the fact of being within the city, with its numerous houses, dense population and strong walls, does not secure the safety of one single dwelling. This teaches us that it is not enough to be in the Church of God ; since all the sacraments, and God's ministers and our own will cannot

[1] Eph. ii. 19.

[2] 1 Cor. iii. 7.

protect one human soul, unless the Lord Himself be the Captain of the watch. And if so, how little can the soul of man avail to guard itself? And note, that whereas it is said in the first verse *Except the Lord build*, yet it is not here said *Except the Lord wake* (since *He that watcheth over Israel slumbers not nor sleeps*), but *except the Lord keep*; there can be no doubt of His power, and only our own sins can oppose His good will.

(3) *Vanum est vobis ante lucem sùrgere : sùrgite postquam sedéritis qui manducátis panem dolóris.*

It is vain for you to rise before the light: rise after ye have been sitting, ye who eat bread of sorrow.

Says St. Augustine: There is no use in *rising*, that is, in being proud and self-reliant, before the *Light*, which is Christ, arises on our souls. It is good to rise after Him, not before Him; that is, not to set our own will before Him, as the mother of James and John did when she asked for the chief seats in His kingdom [1]; as Peter did when he strove to dissuade Him from His Passion [2]. After we *have been sitting* in humility at the Master's feet, it will be time enough for us *to rise* when we have eaten of that *bread of sorrow* which it is His will to give us.

(4) *Cum déderit diléctis Suis somnum: ecce heréditas Dómini filii; merces, fructus ventris.*

When He giveth His beloved sleep: lo, the heritage of the Lord, sons; the reward, the Fruit of the womb.

When He giveth His beloved sleep, that peaceful sleep of a holy death, whose waking is in heaven; a gift given by the Father as the fruit of that time when *He gave His beloved sleep* upon the Cross.

Behold the heritage of the Lord, sons. Reading these two together we see that God's own special heritage are those saints who have fallen asleep in Jesus, *the reward of the Fruit of the womb* of Mary, the purchased possession of which the Incarnation and Passion were the price. *Sons*, born of water and the Holy Ghost, are the Lord's heritage; and the *reward*,

[1] Matt. xx. 22.

[2] *Ibid.* xvi. 22.

the priceless possession bestowed on these sons is Himself, the Fruit of the Virgin's womb.

(5) *Sicut sagittæ in manu potentis : ita filii excussorum.* *Like arrows in the hand of the mighty one : even so are children of the shaken.*

Children of the shaken. These words are explained as meaning "shaken out," "rejected," or "shot swiftly" from the bow. In any sense, says St. Augustine, the word *shaken* means the Apostles themselves, shot as from the bow of Christ, the *Mighty One*, to pierce the hearts of the nations ; *children* mean the generation of teachers whom the same apostles sent in turn. Holy teachers, says Cardinal Hugo, are like an arrow, shapely, because humble ; slender, because poor ; straight in charity ; smooth in equity ; long in long-suffering ; feathered with divers virtues ; headed with the steel of patience ; sharp in keen intellect : piercing in zeal ; swift in readiness of obedience ; motionless of themselves ; but when shot forth by Him, in Whose hands they are, they go straight and surely to the mark.

(6) *Beatus vir qui implèvit desiderium suum ex ipsis : non confundetur cum loquetur inimicis suis in porta.* *Happy is the man who filleth his desire of them : he shall not be ashamed when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

St. Augustine explains this verse as follows. *The man* who has taken to himself, or *filled his desire* with the teaching of the Apostles, will feel no shame or confusion at openly contending with the teachers of false doctrine *in the gate*, that is in the matter of Christ Himself, by boldly declaring the truth concerning Him, as the Apostles did themselves when brought before kings and governors. They who stand at His side are *in the gate* ; they who are against Him are shut outside, and may not enter into the city until they have confessed Him in Whose Name He bids them knock and ask for entrance.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father the Builder and Keeper of the House and City ; Glory to the Son the Fruit of the Virgin's Womb ; Glory to the Holy Ghost Who giveth His beloved Sleep.

PSALM CXXVII.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ bestows eternal blessedness on them that fear Him. The voice of the Prophet touching Christ and the Church. This, the ninth step, declares, under the type of a wife, that all who fear the Lord flourish about the table of the Altar, and that they see children's children of their own doctrine and example, and peace upon Israel in heaven is their end. The voice of all that fear the Lord.

Venerable Bede : In the first paragraph the Prophet, under certain figures, counts up the blessings of them that fear the Lord, that he may kindle the minds of the devout with the force of heavenly reward. In the second he blesses them that they may receive eternal joys ; lest every one should be afraid of this most sweet joy.

(1) <i>Beati omnes qui timent Dóminum ; qui ámbulant in viis Ejus.</i>	<i>Blessed are all they that fear the Lord : that walk in His ways.</i>
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St. Hilary remarks that where the Fear of the Lord is mentioned in Holy Writ it is never set by itself, as though sufficing for the consummation of our faith ; but it always has something added or prefixed by which we can estimate its due proportion of perfection. Of the Fear of the Lord, one of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Ghost, it is written : *Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the Fear of the Lord* [1]. Therefore, it is something we ought to learn. Our Fear of God, says St. Hilary, is to be pure and filial and is to be found in our love of Him. Love is the outcome of that awe, a love which makes us *walk in His ways*. And although there be only one Way, Christ Himself, yet here many *ways* are spoken of, to show us that entrance is easy and not limited to any particular calling or mode of serving God. Nevertheless all these subordinate ways are reducible to two ; *for all the ways of the Lord are Mercy and Truth* [2] ; both of which must

[1] Ps. xxxv. 11.

[2] Ps. xxv. 10.

be followed together, because Mercy without Truth leads to laxity, and Truth without Mercy degenerates into sternness.

(2) <i>Labóres mánuum tu- arum quia manducábis: be- tus es et bene tibi erit.</i>	<i>For thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands: happy art thou, and it shall be well with thee.</i>
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There is a fourfold literal sense here : Thou shalt live by honest, peaceful labour ; not by rapine and violence, nor yet indolently and luxuriously ; thou shalt eat, and not as a miser, stint thyself and others ; thy crops shall not be blighted, but shall bring forth abundantly ; and no enemy shall destroy or carry off thy harvest.

Thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands. But he who hates labour, does not eat of it, nor can he say : *My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work* [1]. On the other hand, he to whom such labour is a delight does not merely look forward in hope to the future fruits or rewards of labour, but even, here and now, finds sustenance and pleasure in toiling for God ; so *it is well with him* in this world, even amidst all its cares and troubles, and *it shall be well with him* in that which is to come. Thus the Carthusian. There is in this verse also a reference to the Blessed Eucharist. Jesus, the great High Priest, is the One who consecrates at Mass. The Blessed Sacrament does indeed come from the work of His hands, and He is the Head of that Mystical Body which eats and drinks of Him daily therein ; as He will be, in another fashion, the food of His elect in heaven : then shall be fulfilled that prophecy which Isaias spoke of Him : *He shall see the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied* [2].

(3) <i>Uxor tua sicut vitis abúndans : in latéribus domus tuæ.</i>	<i>Thy wife shall be as the fruit- ful vine : upon the sides of thy house.</i>
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The whole figure St. Augustine takes of the Church as the Bride of Christ, an interpretation enforced by Our Lord's styling Himself *the Vine* [3]. Close to Him, to His sides, those sacred walls of His human Body, His Bride clings ;

[1] John iv. 34.

[2] liii. 11.

[3] John xv. 1.

there only can she flourish and bring forth fruit. Turning from the Head to the members, we find other interpretations. The *wife* is our bodily frame, subjected with all its affections to the Reason, and bearing, trained against the walls of thought and action, abundant fruit of holy aspirations and good work. Another view is that Wisdom is meant, as we read : *I loved her and sought her out from youth, I desired to make her my spouse, and I was a lover of her beauty* [1]. This last is St. Hilary's.

(4) *Filii tui sicut novellæ
olivárum : in circúitu mensæ
tuæ.* *Thy children like olive plants :
round about thy table.*

The olive is the type of prosperity, because evergreen, strong, and fruitful. *Round about*, Bellarmine explains as all in their father's sight and as being ready to wait on him for any service. These earthly children are figures, says St. Augustine, of the spiritual children of the Church, who was herself born from the side of her dying Spouse ; fruitful, peaceful, gathered round God's Altar to feed there, set about the *table* of Holy Writ to taste of the sweets it furnishes to to them. And observe that we have in the inner courts of the House Mystical both the *vine* and the *olive* ; because, as Cassiodorus says, oil and wine are needful to be poured into the wounds of those whom the Good Samaritan brings to be tended there ; the strength and severity of the Old Testament, the softness and tenderness of the New. So, too, says the Carmelite, in those goods works of ours which are, as it were, our children, Justice and Mercy shall meet, and they should be gathered round Him Who is Himself the *Table* of the Lord's House, looking to Him only and waiting to minister to His wishes.

(5) *Ecce sic benedicétur
homo : qui timet Dóminum.* *Lo, thus shall a man be
blessed : that feareth the Lord.*
(6) *Benedícat tibi Dóminus
ex Sion : et vídeas bona Jerú-
salem ómnibus diébus vitæ
tuæ.* *The Lord from out of Sion
bless thee : and mayest thou see
the good things of Jerusalem
all the days of thy life.*

Here again we have the contrast between Sion, the Church Militant, and Jerusalem, the Church Triumphant. God shall so keep thee with the grace and strength stored up in His Church on earth for all the wants of every day of our life, that thou shalt overcome all enemies and obstacles in thy way and attain to the unending joys of Jerusalem which is above. Thus the Carthusian. And note, we are to seek God's blessing from the Church. This is His covenanted way. It is therefore wisdom to put ourselves in harmony with her practice, to make her prayers our prayer, and to do her work in her own way.

(7) *Et videas filios filiôrum tuorum : pacem super Israel.* *And thou shalt see the children of thy children : peace upon Israel.*

We shall one day, in heaven at least, see the fruit of our good works. For nothing done for God goes without its effect. And *peace upon Israel*, the crowning joy of the Beatific Vision, when, after we have ceased to wrestle as Jacob and have become the Israel of God, we shall see Him Who is our Peace, face to face.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who blesses us out of Sion ; Glory to the Son Who feeds us around His Table ; Glory to the Holy Ghost the Giver of Peace upon Israel.

LITTLE CHAPTER [I].

In platéis sicut cinnamónum et bálsamum aromatizans odórem dedi : quasi myrrha élécta dedi suavitátem odóris.

R̃. *Deo gratias.*

In the streets like the cinnamon and sweet-smelling balm did I give forth my odour ; like choice myrrh I yielded a sweetness of smell.

\ *Thanks be to God.*

Ÿ. Post partum Virgo inviolata permansisti.

R. Dei Genitrix, intercede pro nobis.

After bearing thou didst remain a spotless maiden.

Mother of God intercede for us.

We have heard these words in the Third Lesson of Matins. Here, coming after the Gradual Psalms, we may take them as words of encouragement. The sweet example of Mary attracts souls to follow her virtues, as the smell of rich spices attracts the passers-by in the streets. The spices mentioned are referred to our Lady in this way. St. Bonaventure says : The fragrance of Mary was like *cinnamon* in outward intercourse ; like *balm* in the interior unction of devotion ; and like *myrrh* in the bitterness of trouble. O rich indeed, says St. Bernard, is she who was filled with the balm of the Holy Ghost ; this precious balm was given to thee in such superabundant measure that it overflows in all directions. The mention of *myrrh*, coming at this ninth hour when Jesus died, reminds us of the Mother of Sorrows. Taken altogether the Little Chapter is a fitting comment on the three preceding Psalms and is to be understood in reference to the thoughts they have suggested.

The Versicle and Response celebrate the Divine truth that Mary, in and after childbearing, remained ever a Virgin ; for she was the closed Door through which only the Lord could pass.

COLLECT.

Famulorum tuorum, quæsumus Dómine, delictis ignósce : ut qui Tibi placere de actibus nostris non valémus, Genitricis Filii Tui Dómini nostri intercessióne salvémur : Qui tecum, &c.

We beseech Thee, O Lord, pardon the sins of Thy servants : that we who cannot please Thee by our actions, may be saved by the intercession of the Mother of Thy Son, our Lord, Who, with Thee, &c.

This prayer sums up all the thoughts of this Office : the captivity of sin, our own helplessness, and the good things of Jerusalem, high among which is Mary, by whose intercession we hope to reach them.

During Advent.

The Antiphon and Prayer are from Lauds for this season. The Little Chapter is from Prime. The Versicle and Response commemorate the Annunciation.

During Christmas-tide.

The Antiphon and Prayer are from the Proper of Lauds; the Little Chapter and Versicle as above.

CHAPTER VIII.

AT VESPERS [1], OR EVENSONG.

The introductory Prayers are as at Lauds.

FIRST ANTIPHON.

*Dum esset Rex in accúbitu
Súo nardus meá dedit odórem
suavitátis.*

*While the King was at His
repose my spikenard gave forth
its odour of sweetness.*

The Antiphons of this office form a series of pictures of Our Lady's relations with our Lord. This first one refers to the Incarnation. While the King was reposing in the unspeakable joy of the Father He was attracted to earth by the immaculate soul of Mary, which, like spikenard, gave forth its odour. Mary was thus a sharer in the sacrifice of the Lamb, which was the purpose of the Incarnation ; and this thought must be borne in mind while saying the following Psalm which treats of the Eternal Priesthood of her Son.

PSALM CIX.

Title.—A Psalm of David.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ was born from the spiritual womb of God the Father, before the morning star. The voice of the Church and of Christ to the Father. The voice

[1] Vespers is the hour of the Evening Incense, and together with Lauds forms the original office. It follows the general lines of the Morning Song. Says Durandus : The Church in this hour says five Psalms—first, on account of the five wounds of Christ Who offered His sacrifice for us at the Vespertide of the world. Secondly,

of the Church concerning the Father and the Son. The Promise of the Father to the Son. A prophecy of future victory and concerning the Incarnation. It is sung concerning Christ the Lord.

Venerable Bede : This Psalm sings most fully and briefly of the Incarnation and Divinity of our Lord. In the first verse the Prophet narrates what the Father said to the Son ; in the second the Father to some extent, according to the measure of our captivity, declares the nature of the Godhead. In the third part the Prophet speaks until the end, showing the form of His manhood.

(1) *Dixit Dóminus Dómino
meo : Sede a dextris Meis.*

*The Lord said to my Lord :
Sit Thou at My right hand.*

(2) *Donec ponam inimi-
cos Tuos : scabéllum pedum
Tuórum.*

*Until I place Thine enemies :
as a footstool for Thy feet.*

The beginning of this Psalm can only be compared in sublimity to the opening words of St. John's Gospel : *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God* [1]. The Father said unto the Son, that which the One did not utter with the mouth, nor the Other hear with the ear. The Father willeth, and the Son knoweth it : the Son willeth, and the Father knoweth it. We are in the presence of the awful mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Let us fall down and worship. The words are not spoken to the Eternal Son in respect of His Godhead ; but as incarnate in time, and therefore inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood. The Psalmist calls Him *my Lord*, because He is flesh of our flesh, our Brother, our very own in right of His Mother.

Sit thou at My right hand. Our Lord, as Man, occupies the highest place in heaven, and to Him is committed the judg-

because we pray for forgiveness of those sins which in the course of the day we have committed through the five senses of our bodies. Thirdly, by those five Psalms the Church protects herself against nocturnal tribulations. For this hour brings to mind the weeping of those on whom the Sun of Righteousness hath set and who therefore are in darkness."

[1] John i. 1.

ment of the world, as it is written : *They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory* [1]. The word *sit* denotes the Human Nature of Christ, inasmuch as sitting cannot be predicated of the incorporeal Godhead ; and in contrast to the prominence of standing, it implies His present invisibility. St. Augustine says on these words : *Sit Thou*, not only on high, but also in secret, exalted that Thou mayest rule, hidden that Thou mayest be the object of belief ; for what reward can there be for faith unless that which we believe be hidden ? The Carmelite observes that it also denotes His perfect rest after all His sufferings, in contrast to the time when *weary with His journey* [2] He sat beside Jacob's well ; and still more to that day when He was exalted on the painful throne of the Cross ; so that He, Whom His mother called Benoni, *Son of my sorrow*, is called by His Father, Benjamin, that is, *Son of My right hand* [3]. *Sit Thou*, rest Thyself beside Me, rule with Me, enjoy My glory, be nearest unto Me, partake of My Majesty and power, reign with Me in co-equal power, as to Godhead with the same, and nearest, as to Thy Manhood.

Until I make Thine enemies as a footstool for Thy feet. The word *until* is often used in Scripture without implying cessation when the point of time indicated as future has been reached. But in this case there seems to be a limit implied, for St. Paul says : *Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. For He hath put all things under His feet. . . . And when all shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subjected unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all* [4]. From this we must not suppose, as Lorin points out, that our Lord's Human Nature will be absorbed in His Divine, or that He will cease to bear Rule ; whereas it is said of Him : *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever* [5]. The true meaning is that His Mediatorial Office and task of administering the

[1] Matt. xxiv. 30.

[2] John iv. 6.

[3] Gen. xxxv. 18.

[4] 1 Cor. xv. 24-28.

[5] Ps. xlv. 7.

government of the Church Militant will then cease, as there will be no more sin requiring His intercession, no more war demanding His invincible leadership. But His Priesthood is eternal and He always will be the mouthpiece of Creation, worshipping the Father with a perfect and complete adoration. *His enemies*, sin and evil, shall be made *His footstool*, whether trodden in His anger and trampled in His fury, as in the case of the finally impenitent, or voluntarily humbling themselves to *worship at His footstool ; for He is holy* [1]. Bellarmine notes that it is the Father Who speaks these words ; not as implying the Son cannot do it for Himself, since whatever the Father doth the Son doth likewise, but because this is part of the Son's reward for His obedience as Man : *Wherefore God hath highly exalted Him* [2]. By reason of the close union which exists between Jesus and Mary, we may now read this verse of her set at His right hand and given the victory. May we be her willing captives !

(3) *Virgam virtutis Tuæ
emittet Dóminus ex Sion :
domináre in médio inimi-
córurum Tuórum.*

*The Lord shall send forth
the rod of Thy power out of
Sion : Rule Thou in the midst
of Thine enemies.*

Christ Himself is the *Rod out of the stem of Jesse* [3], but as He in His Manhood went forth not from *Sion*, but from Bethlehem, commentators take the words generally of the Gospel Law preached first from Jerusalem, and more especially of the Cross, the sceptre of Christ's Kingdom, *His strong staff and beautiful rod* [4] ; wherewith He, as with a bar of iron, bruises His opponents to make their hearts contrite ; wherewith He, by the hands of the Apostles, subdued the world.

In the midst of Thine enemies, that is to say, in the very hearts of those who were once Thy bitterest foes. And therefore it is said *Rule*—not *slay*—because the Kingdom of Christ is enlarged not by destruction but by the conversion of sinners.

[1] Ps. c. 5.

[2] Phil. ii. 9.

[3] Is. xi. 1.

[4] Jer. xlviii. 17.

(4) *Tecum principium in die virtutis Tuæ in splendôribus sanctôrum : Ex útero ante luciferum genui Te.*

With Thee is the beginning, in the day of Thy power, in the splendours of the saints : from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

With Thee, inherent in Thy Nature. *In the day of Thy power*, when taking on Thee our flesh. *In the splendours of the saints*, when Thou shalt give light unto the world by the beauty and radiance of Thine Apostles and disciples ; or when Thou shalt come to judge and display Thy force and power in marvellous fashion and make the splendours of Thy rising saints more glorious than that of the sun. Such exalted power is in Thee, because Thou art of the same substance with Me and partake of the same Nature, seeing that *I begot Thee from the womb before the morning star. From the womb.* The Sonship of our Lord is not an adoption, but natural and inherent. Some see here a reference to that "Fruit of the generous womb" of which the Angelical sings in the *Pange Lingua*, and to the Immaculate Conception, which made of Mary's womb a sanctified tabernacle for the operations of the Holy Ghost. The Birth of our Lord was *in the splendour of the saints*, because of the glorious vision of the angelic hosts which proclaimed His Nativity, because of the presence of the Queen of Saints, and St. Joseph, the *just man*. St. Augustine thus explains this difficult verse : *The beginning* means the Eternal Father, the Source of all things, even of the Son and Holy Ghost ; and that His union with the Son, always perfect, though hidden, will be disclosed and revealed in the day of the Son's power at the Judgment, amidst the glories of the risen saints. The Doctor of Grace takes the last clause to denote not only the eternal Generation of the Word before the stars of heaven, but also the miraculous Birth of Christ in the early morning of Christmas day ; or, as others will have it, of her *who looketh forth as the morning* [1] in her beauty and purity.

(5) *ſurávit Dóminus et non
pænitébit Eum : Tu es Sacerdos
in ætérnum secúndum ordinem
Melchisedech.*

*The Lord swore and will
not repent Him : Thou art a
Priest for ever according to the
order of Melchisedech.*

Father Lorin points out that we have an Apostle, St. Paul, to explain this glorious revelation. *The Lord swore.* The Apostle dwells on the exceeding solemnity of this rite of inauguration, distinguishing Christ from the Aaronic ministry. *For those priests were made without an oath, but this with an oath made by Him that said unto Him : The Lord swore and will not repent : Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedech : by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better Testament [1].* Next the Apostle emphasises the words *for ever*, as forming another ground of distinction. *And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death ; but this Man, because He continueth ever, hath an eternal Priesthood : wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them [2].* And thereby the mystical character of Melchisedech and his superiority over Abraham are pointed out, in that his name and office indicate Him as *King of Righteousness* and *King of Peace* ; and as being a type of an Eternal Priest, having no earthly origin, no beginning nor ending ; and that by receiving tithes from the ancestors of Levi he must rank, of necessity, above the Levitical priesthood. Therefore, himself a Gentile, he typifies that King and Priest who should be the Ruler and Head of the Church made up of Jew and Gentile [3]. The word *order* implies the union of the Priestly office with the Kingly rank, as in the prophet Zacharias : *He shall be a priest upon His throne [4].* From the offering of Melchisedech, Bread and Wine, we shall see here the obvious reference to the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

(6) *Dóminus a dextris Tuis :
confrégit in die iræ Suæ réges.*

*The Lord at Thy right hand :
He shall wound even kings in
the day of His wrath.*

[1] Heb. vii. 21.

[2] *Ibid.* 23.

[3] *Ibid.* 2.

[4] vi. 13.

The Psalmist here directs his words to the Eternal Father at Whose *right hand* is the Lord Who is to do these wondrous deeds. Although *kings* may rise up against the Anointed and strive to overthrow His Church, yet He will rout them. He has done so in the past and will do so finally at the Doom.

(7) *Judicabit in nationibus,
implébit ruínas : conquassabit
capita in terra multórum.*

*He shall judge among the
nations, He shall fill the ruins :
He shall dash to pieces the heads
in the land of many.*

St. Augustine understands this verse of the dealings of God and Christ with the enemies of the Church in this world ; and takes the words as denoting His work in the conversion of souls. St. Bruno takes the first clause of our Lord's rule over Jew and Gentile alike ; not judging them, but judging and overthrowing Satan's power among them ; the second clause of the restoration of His ruined Sion by building up again those who level themselves low in humility, or by filling up anew with men the heavenly ranks left vacant by the fate of the angels ; while the last paragraph is taken as meaning that He makes Himself the one Head, overthrowing all rivals which set up many heads other than Himself in the world. Some of the Fathers take the verse of the Day of Judgment, and look upon our Lord as the Divine Conqueror and Avenger of God's insulted Majesty.

(8) *De torrente in via bibet :
propterea exaltabit caput.*

*He shall drink of the torrent
in the way : therefore shall He
lift up His head.*

To the splendours of the Psalm, the pomp and majesty therein revealed, there comes now a minor chord of intense poignancy. The Divine King and Priest is to suffer ; for He is the pre-ordained Victim. *Torrent*, that is, an intermittent water-course temporarily swollen by storms which bring down the rains from the hills. And this is explained as typifying the hurried, turbid, noisy, yet brief course of human life, to which our Lord bound Himself by His Incarnation, from His throne in heaven ; drinking of the troubles of our mortal condition truly *in the way* ; for He was a stranger and a

pilgrim on earth, far from His country ; nay, going down by His Passion, which He began by crossing over the brook Cedron [1], into the lowest depths of the *torrent*, so as not to drink for refreshment and pleasure, but allowing the waters to *come in even to His Soul* [2], when His Head was lifted up on the Cross as he drank the last drops of that cup His Father had given Him. For His obedience thus carried out God hath highly lifted Him up, first in the Resurrection and then in the Ascension, and hath given Him a *Name above every other name* [3]. Thus St. Augustine.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory to the Father Who said unto my Lord : Sit Thou at My right hand ; Glory to the Son, my Lord, the Priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedech ; Glory to the Holy Ghost the Power amidst the splendours of the Saints.

SECOND ANTIPHON.

*Læva Ejus sub capite meo,
et dextera Illius amplexabitur
me.*

*His left hand is under my
head, and His right hand
embraces me.*

The gracious vision of the Maiden Mother bearing in her arms her Son Who tenderly embraces her is at once suggested by this Antiphon. If He in all the weakness and helplessness of babyhood clung to her and caressed her, how much more now does He in heaven reward her with His unspeakable love for all she did for Him on earth ? The thought of the dignity accruing to our Lady through the Divine Maternity gives a point to the Psalm which follows ; for she has been taken from her humility and set above the princes of heaven. She, the Virgin, has become the joyful mother of children, having borne us all in Jesus Christ. Therefore, as says St. Bernard, is she the happy soul resting on the heart of Christ and reposing in the arms of the Divine Word !

[1] John xviii. 1.

[2] Ps. lxx. 1.

[3] Phil. ii. 9.

PSALM CXII.

Title.—Alleluia.*Argument.*

Tomasi : That Christ turneth the Church, long barren, into the fruitfulness of holiness. The voice of the Church with praise. The voice of the Church concerning her faithful ones.

Venerable Bede : The Prophet in the first part exhorts the devout children to offer praise to God and to proclaim Him in all the world. Secondly he does himself what he exhorts others to do. The calling of the New People.

(1) *Laudate púeri Dóminum : laudáte nomen Dómini.*

*Praise the Lord ye children :
O praise the Name of the Lord.*

(2) *Sit Nomen Dómini benedictum : ex hoc nunc et usque in sæculum.*

*Blessed be the Name of the
Lord : from this time and for
evermore.*

A triple utterance of the Divine Name, the triple call to praise it, veils here the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. *Ye children* : St. Augustine bids us note purity, innocence, and docility are here denoted, not any special time of life ; as the Apostle says : *Brethren, be not children in understanding ; howbeit in malice be ye children ; but in understanding be men* [1]. It is out of the mouths of such babes and sucklings as these that He hath perfected praise, as He accepted that of the children in the Temple when the voices of men were silent.

From this time forth. God's praises are not to cease with our advancing years. The words do not mean that He begins to be praised only now ; but that each of us makes a beginning of joining in the hymn of creation ; while if we only persevere in His service our song shall go on *for evermore* in heaven.

(3) *A solis ortu usque ad occásum : laudábile Nomen Dómini.*

*From the rising of the sun
to the going down : the Lord's
Name is worthy of praise.*

Here is a further instruction. God's praise is to be not merely ceaseless but universal ; not restricted by the limits of

Judea, but extending to the utmost bounds of the earth. This is achieved by the Sacrifice of the Mass which was foretold by the prophet Malachias : *From the rising of the sun till the going down of the same My Name shall be great among the Gentiles : and in every place incense shall be offered to My Name and a clean oblation : For My Name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts [1].* In which prophecy there is exactly the same three-fold proclamation of the Holy Name, pointing, as in the Psalm, to the same mystery. And we, too, says Cardinal Hugo, in life and in death, in the morning and the evening of our mortal career, praise the Lord Jesus for His arising as the Sun of Righteousness in His Nativity, His setting in the ruddy glow of His Passion.

(4) <i>Excelsus super omnes gentes Dóminus : et super cælos glória Ejus.</i>	<i>The Lord is high above all the heathen : and His glory above the heavens.</i>
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By the preaching of the Gospel *the Lord is high above all the heathen*, for His Name is known and loved by those who heretofore were darkness, but now are light.

His glory above the heavens. We may here see a reference to the angelic songs at the Nativity, and again to the renewed pæan of triumph at the Ascension, as well as to His Mission of the Paraclete thereupon to the lower heavens, the Apostles, who brought the Gentiles to confess His Name.

(5) <i>Quis sicut Dóminus Deus noster, Qui in altis hábitat : et humília respicit in cælo et in terra ?</i>	<i>Who is like the Lord our God, Who dwells on high : and regardeth the things that are lowly in heaven and earth ?</i>
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What are *the things that are lowly in heaven* ? There is not a creature there who is not penetrated through and through with humility. Now humility or lowliness means an acknowledgment that we are creatures having nothing of ourselves and owing all to God's love. The Prophet says : *Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity : Whose Name is Holy ; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that*

is of a contrite and humble spirit; to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite ones [1]. If these words are true of God's saints, how much more perfectly are they fulfilled in her who, filled with the same Spirit that inspired this Psalm, said: *He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden* [2]; and how much more of Him Who, as God, ceased not to be in heaven while as Man He was the pattern of humility: *Learn of Me because I am meek and lowly of heart* [3].

(6) *Suscitans a terra inopem: et de stercore erigens pauperem.*

(7) *Ut colloquet eum cum principibus: cum principibus populi Sui.*

He taketh the needy out of the dust: and raiseth up the poor man from the dunghill.

That He may set him with the princes: even with the princes of His people.

These words are taken almost without variation from the Song of Anna [4], and are recalled in the Song of our Lady. *The needy—the poor man.* Some commentators take these of Christ Himself, that Poor One Who had nowhere to lay His head, and Who was abased to the lowest in His Passion, becoming *a worm and no man* [5], and then by His Resurrection was set on high. The *earth* and the *dunghill* are taken by some to refer respectively to the Jews and Gentiles; and they tell us that Christ chooses His elect from both these indiscriminately, to set them with His angels and saints in heaven. Referring the verse to our Lord, St. Bernard reminds us of His Birth in the manger. He was literally brought down to the humiliation of the dunghill, whence He was exalted again to riches and honour. So we are reminded that humility and penance are the first steps towards being lifted up by the Lord and set among His *princes*. These verses find a special echo in the souls of those who have been called to the religious life. Taken out of their own nothingness and misery, God has set them among His chosen ones; here on earth ruling, as princes, their bodies by enlightened

[1] Is. lvii. 15.

[2] Luke i. 48.

[3] Matt. xi. 29.

[4] 1 Kings ii. 8.

[5] Ps. xxi. 6.

Reason, and in heaven reigning with Him for ever. A Vocation is indeed a fellowship with the saints and a principality exceeding all earthly honours.

(6) *Qui habitare facit stérilem in domo : matrem filiorum lætântem.*

He maketh the barren woman to keep the house : a joyful mother of children.

This verse is taken in three senses. The first refers to the Gentiles brought into the Church. Isaias prophesies thus : *Sing O barren, thou that didst not bear : break forth into singing and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child : for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations : spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left ; and thy seed shall inherit the Gentiles, and make the desolate cities to be inhabited. Fear not ; for thou shalt not be ashamed : neither be thou confounded : for thou shalt not be put to shame : for thou shalt forget the shame of thy youth, and shalt not remember the reproach of thy widowhood any more ; For thy Maker is thine husband : the Lord of Hosts is His Name : and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel : The God of the whole earth shall He be called [1].* The second interpretation is of a soul hitherto unfruitful in good works, but now wedded to Christ by penance and love and bringing forth abundant fruits to Christ ; as we see in the religious orders and the lives of the saints. The third interpretation is of the fruitful virginity of our ever dear and blessed Lady who has become, at the foot of the Cross, the Mother of Christians.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who dwelleth on high ; Glory to the Son Who lifts us up from the dunghill ; Glory to the Holy Ghost Who maketh the barren to keep house.

THIRD ANTIPHON.

*Nigra sum sed formósa, filia
Jerusalem : ideo diléxit me
Rex et introduxit me in cubi-
culum Suum.*

*I am black but comely, O
daughters of Jerusalem : there-
fore hath the King loved me
and brought me into His
innermost chamber.*

It is the Maiden-mother, smitten with grief and plunged in a sea of woe, that we contemplate in this Antiphon. Mary is at the foot of the Cross. Sorrow has discoloured her. Her compassion with her Divine Son has pierced her to the heart. She could have laid down her life for Him had He wished it : and she lives to see Him die ; and willingly sees she this (though it break her heart), for such is His will. Her perfect conformity with the Divine will in this supreme hour is the last test of that Mother beyond all compare. *Therefore* is she, in the peace of Jerusalem, the object of her Son's tenderest love.

PSALM CXXI.

This, the same as the third Psalm of Terce, will be found at page 343.

FOURTH ANTIPHON.

*Fam hiems tránsiit, imber
abiit et recéssit : surge amica
Mea, et veni.*

*The winter is past, the rain
is over and gone : Arise, My
friend, and come away.*

The chilly winter of sorrow is past, the rain of affliction is over and gone ; Mary has been made conformable to the Image of her Divine Son. The exile is at an end. For twelve years has she helped on the infant Church ; and now the moment of reunion is at hand. *Come, My beloved, arise and come away.* And like she did after the Angel's first visit, *Mary in those days arose and went with haste into the hill-country* [1], into that City among the mountains, whence

[1] Luke i. 39.

cometh help, where the Son abides. It is the picture of Mary assumed into heaven we contemplate in this Antiphon, and of the *sleep He giveth His beloved*.

PSALM CXXVI.

This, the same as the second Psalm at None, will be found at page 365.

FIFTH ANTIPHON.

<i>Speciôsa facta es et súavis</i>	<i>Thou art made beauteous</i>
<i>in deliciis tuis, sancta Dei</i>	<i>and sweet in thy delights, O</i>
<i>Génitrix.</i>	<i>holy Mother of God.</i>

In this Antiphon Mary crowned and rewarded in heaven is the joyful and hopeful picture set before us. The woman set in the heavens clothed with the sun with the moon beneath her feet, and about her head a crown of twelve stars [1]. She is there for our sakes, in the King's house, as Esther, to beseech for her people, to do God's mercy towards them, to make His Word run swiftly in their hearts, to scatter the ashes of penance over their lives, to break up the icy-bound hearts and to be ever the monument and example to all Israel of God's righteousness and judgment.

PSALM CXLVII.

Title.—Alleluia.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ may fill His Church with peace and abundance of spiritual wheat. The voice of Christ to the Church that she may praise the Father : or the voice of the Holy Ghost by the Prophet to the same that she may not cease to praise Christ.

Venerable Bede : In the first part the Prophet accosts Jerusalem, that is, the City on high, that now, made secure in her citizens she ought to praise the Lord with continual

[1] Apoc. xii. 1.

rejoicing. Secondly he counts up at more length, in mystical expression, what great kindness the Loving and Merciful One hath bestowed on His people.

(1) *Lauda Jerúsalem Dó-
minum : lauda Deum tuum
Sion.*

*Praise the Lord O Jeru-
salem : Praise thy God O
Sion.*

The two names denote the one Church under two aspects. St. Paul knew the first as the heavenly one, when He spoke of *Jerusalem which is above, is free, which is the Mother of us all* [1].

And he knew what *Sion* meant who said : *Ye are come unto Mount Sion and the Church of the first-born which are written in heaven* [2]. Both of them, the Triumphant and Militant Church, have the praise of God as their one occupation. But, says the Carmelite, they perform it in different ways. The Church Militant praises Him by persevering in works of mercy ; the Church Triumphant by pure enjoyment and delight in Him, an occupation full of sweetness : interrupted by no trouble, weakened by no fatigue, disturbed by no cloud. Our work will be to praise God and to love Him : *Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house, O Lord, they shall be always praising Thee* [3]. Why ? Unless that they shall be always loving Thee. Why ? Unless that they shall be always beholding Thee.

(2) *Quóniam confortávit
seras portárum tuárum : bene-
dixit filiis tuis in te.*

*For He hath strengthened
the bars of thy gates : and hath
blessed thy children in thee.*

The true *bar* of these *gates*, says St. John Chrysostom, that by which they are fastened on the right hand and the left, is the Cross to which He, Who is the Door, was nailed. It is the *bar* of the heavenly as well as of the earthly Church, and it was in the might of its strong resistance that the *gates of hell* did not prevail against the Gospel, when all kings and nations and cities and hosts of evil spirits endeavoured to sweep it away. The lesser, but still important, *bars* of the Church on earth are the keys of St. Peter, the doctrine of

[1] Gal. iv. 26.

[2] Heb. xii. 23.

[3] Ps. lxxxv. 4.

the Apostles, the bishops, doctors, and priests, by whose vigour and watchfulness the assaults of heresy and unbelief are driven back. The clear living Voice of the Church, speaking through its Infallible Head, teaches us what we have to believe and what we have to do, and guards us from wandering. Faith, Hope and Charity are three good *bars* against the devil and his angels; but Faith faileth, Hope groweth feeble, and Charity waxeth cold, unless each and all be strengthened by the Gifts of the Holy Ghost.

And hath blessed thy children, that is, not only made them happy, but also (a frequent meaning in Scripture) numerous; granting to the Church to increase and multiply and fill the earth.

In thee. The promise is confined to the Church. St. Augustine asks, if the Lord has *strengthened the bars of the gates*, how comes it to pass that there are so many scandals in the Church? Because here the wheat and tares are mingled together; this world is the threshing floor, not the garner. It is not said that God has shot the *bars of the gates*, but that He has *strengthened* them and that for future use; for the time when the Bridegroom comes, and they that be ready to go in with Him to the Marriage. Then shall the door be shut. Then, says the Carthusian, no foe may enter, for the law of absolute holiness keeps sin aloof; no friends shall pass out, for the blessed are confirmed for ever in grace, according to the saying: *Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go out no more* [1].

And hath blessed thy children within thee, since *Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life and may enter through the gates of the City* [2].

(3) <i>Qui p̄suiť fines tuos</i>	<i>He maketh peace in thy</i>
<i>pacem : et adīpe frum̄enti</i>	<i>borders : and with the fat of</i>
<i>s̄tiat te.</i>	<i>wheat satisfieth thee.</i>

Jerusalem is too strong to be assailed, and no foe may cross the frontier of her territory. In that City on high there is *peace* even *in the borders*, for the last and lowest saint in heaven is filled with tranquil rejoicing. Here, in the Church

below, although without are fightings and within alarms, yet *being justified by faith we have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord* [1]. There is another sense in which we can understand *peace in thy borders*; and that is as a prophecy of the Reunion of Christendom when those sects which border on the Church in doctrine and worship shall no longer make war against her, but be reconciled in purest friendship.

And with the fat of wheat satisfieth thee. St. John Chrysostom points out that here the Blessed Sacrament is meant. Its only home, according to the intention of God, is the Catholic Church. He who eats the Lamb outside the House is profane, says one of the Fathers. And observe how by these words *peace* and *wheat* we are taught, says St. Cyril of Jerusalem, how truly the Sacrament of the Altar is the bond of union and mutual charity among the children of Sion. The word *satisfieth* belongs, says Bellarmine, to Jerusalem above, not Sion below. Here we are indeed fed with the *fat of wheat*, but we feed on the Word of God under the Sacramental veils; we drink the water of wisdom, but only from the droppings of the Holy Writ; therefore we are not yet satisfied, nay, our very blessedness consists in hungering and thirsting after righteousness [2]. But there the saints shall know the sweetness of the Eternal Word with no type nor veil between them; there they shall put their lips to the very Source of wisdom, and no longer drink of the mere rills of droppings which come down to water the earth.

(4) <i>Qui emittit elóquium</i>	<i>He sendeth forth His com-</i>
<i>Suum terræ: velóciter currit</i>	<i>mandment upon the earth:</i>
<i>sermo Ejus.</i>	<i>His Word runneth swiftly.</i>

The *commandment* of the New Law of His kingdom *upon earth* was sent when He ordered it to be preached to every nation: *His Word* ran swiftly, *rejoicing as a giant to run his course* [3], when the Only Begotten, the *Almighty Word*, *leaped down from heaven out of the regal throne* [4], to be born of our ever dear and Blessed Lady, to show Himself for a brief time on earth, to renew the world by His Death, and to carry, by means of His Apostles, the glad tidings into all lands. *His*

[1] Rom. v. 1.

[2] Cf. Matt. v. 6.

[3] Ps. xix. 5.

[4] Wisdom xviii. 15.

Word runneth swiftly in him who is free from sin and, giving himself up to God, widens his heart : *I have run in Thy commandments when Thou didst enlarge my heart* [1].

(5) *Qui dat nivem sicut lanam : nébulam sicut cinerem spargit.* *He giveth snow like wool : and scattereth hoar-frost like ashes.*

The *snow* God sends is not merely like *wool* in its whiteness, but because it serves, in spite of its coldness, as a coverlet to keep the earth sheltered and warm from the keen blasts of winter. The *hoar-frost*, powdered lightly over the ground everywhere *like ashes*, also penetrates below the surface of the earth, and, expanding as it does so, breaks up the soil, making it friable and easier for plants to shoot upwards through ; it also kills most of the insect life that would destroy the vegetation if unchecked. St. Augustine points out that God takes sinners, cold and lifeless, with neither spiritual fervour nor practical activity and so transfigures them that, as Christ's raiment when He flashed forth His radiance for a moment on earth, they *became shining, exceeding white as the snow* [2]. Conversely this chill *snow* becomes the raiment of Christ, without spot or wrinkle, and keeps His members warm in new-found charity. The *frost* which breaks up the hard ground, and the deeper it goes does more good, what is it save those salutary afflictions which God sends to soften sinners, and make them fit to receive the seed of His Word ; till they themselves are colder than the *snow* itself, but now kindled through and through with the fervour of Divine love, become like *ashes*, tokens alike of fire and repentance, the relics of a whole burnt offering upon the altar of God ?

(6) *Mittit crystallum Suam sicut bucéllas : ante faciém frigidis Ejus quis sustinébit ?* *He casteth forth His ice like morsels : who is able to abide His frost ?*

St. Augustine explains that *ice*, more solid and cold than snow or frost, denotes the most hardened sinners, not so much coarse and depraved ones, as hard, keen, clear enemies of truth, who are not ignorant of it, but deliberately resist it,

[1] Mark ix. 3.

[2] Ps. cxviii. 32.

like Saul of Tarsus ; yet he, in God's providence, was cast forth to feed the Gentiles hungering for the Bread of Life ; himself, as a member of Christ, being a *morsel* of that Bread. And when God did so send forth the mighty preacher, *who was able to abide His frost ?* Another interpreter has it that as *ice* is pure and transparent, so that pure and crystalline substance which is sent forth as *morsels of bread* is the Blessed Sacrament of Christ's Body. Again, *ice* in its stern rigidity and coldness is an emblem of the Mosaic Law broken up by God's grace, since who could abide that *frost ?*

Who can abide His frost ? Who is really in love with sin ? Who can bear to be cold and hard, unwarmed by the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness ? Does any despair because he is snow and ice when he fain would be fire and heat ? Let him be of good cheer, for—

(7) *Emittet Verbum Suum,
et liquefaciet ea : flabit Spiritus
Ejus et fluent aquæ.*

*He will send forth His Word
and will melt them : His Spirit
will blow and the waters will
flow.*

The remedy for sin is at hand, the prison of winter is unlocked by the bright sun, and warm breezes, by the Incarnation of Jesus and the sending of the Holy Ghost, the Southern Wind which blows through the garden of God and the perfume of its spices flows out [1]. *The waters will flow* when the hard heart melts into tears of repentance ; the waters *flow* when all the mighty powers of heart and head, but lately frozen up in unbelief, *melt* and come down in eloquent torrents of doctrine, and irrigate the fields below ; as they did when the Word, with His one cry of *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me ?* [2] melted that persecutor ; as they did when the Holy Ghost set him apart for the work of preaching to the Gentiles. Wherefore it follows :—

(8) *Qui annúnciat Verbum
suum Jacob : justitias et
judicia Sua Israel.*

*He showeth His Word unto
Jacob : His statutes and
judgments unto Israel.*

(9) *Non fecit taliter omni
natióni : et iudicia Sua non
manifestávit eis.*

*He hath not dealt so with
any nation : neither hath He
manifested His judgments to
them.*

The younger people, the Gentile Church, has had the Word *manifested* to it before its eyes : *Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth* [1]. The Word came first to the Jews, the literal but carnal Jacob : *He came unto His own, and His own received Him not* [2]. The new Jacob has supplanted his elder brother : *For blindness in part is happened unto Israel until the fulness of the Gentiles is come in* [3]. St. Bruno remarks, the first part of God's grace is showing His Word, that we may embrace Him by faith while we are still struggling as Jacob ; the next is the process of sanctification through obedience, when, after promising allegiance to our King, He explains to us the laws of His kingdom and makes us Israel, that is, *princes of God*.

He hath not dealt so with any nation ; as in spite of their privileges, the Jews would not listen to the Word, these have been taken away and applied to the Christian Church gathered out of those very heathen to whom He had not manifested His judgments, but now are favoured by His grace ; while the carnal Israel is rejected even as they rejected Him.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who sendeth forth His Word ;
Glory to the Son Himself the Word that melteth sinners ;
Glory to the Holy Ghost the Spirit Who maketh the waters
flow.

LITTLE CHAPTER [4].

*Ab initio et ante sæcula
creáta sum ; et usque ad futú-
rum sæculum non désinam : et
in habitatióne sancta coram
Ipso ministrávi.*

*From the beginning and
before the ages was I created ;
and for all eternity I shall
never cease : and in the holy
dwelling have I ministered
before Him.*

R̃. *Deo gratias.*

Thanks be to God.

[1] Gal. iii. 1.

[2] John i. 11.

[3] Rom. xi. 25.

[4] Eccl. xxiv. 14.

These words apply in the first place to the Eternal Wisdom of God, the Second Person of the Adorable Trinity. But Holy Church, the only Mistress and Explainer of Scripture, also applies them to her who is the "Seat of Wisdom," and whose holiness is a mark of the great work which the Divine Wisdom has done. As in the five Antiphons and Psalms we have had our Lady in her five relations with God, so here we have her as for ever pre-ordained, the Mother of the Living ; God having decreed Creation, in the same decree were pre-ordained Jesus and Mary : He as the Head of Creation, she as the way by which He was to enter it. He is therefore the real Adam, and she the real Eve. Our first parents according to the flesh were created on the model of Jesus and Mary : *For Whom all things were made, that He might have in all things the principality* [1] ; and as these models existed in the mind of God before the Fall was discerned, it follows that they were not included in it ; Jesus on account of His Godhead, Mary on account of her Motherhood. We may believe that Jesus would have come in any case, so as to be able to give His Father that worship which Creation could not. But when the Fall was foreseen then did the Incarnation take its remedial character, and show us depths upon depths of God's infinite love. Without the Fall we might have had Jesus Incarnate, but not the infinite pathos of the Crucifix. We should not have known the Man of Sorrows, nor the Mother thereof. This is the teaching of Scotus on the Incarnation, and in it the dogma of the Immaculate Conception seems to find its natural place. The *Myroure* explains this Little Chapter : "The Chapter is said in the person of our Lady thus : *ab initio*. This is thus to mean : Endlessly, before all time, I was fore-known and ordained of God to be made. . . . And I shall never fail, neither in soul by any sin, nor in body by any corruption. For our Lady's holy body is not turned to corruption in earth, but taken up and knit with the soul in the glory of heaven. . . . Was it not a holy dwelling when our Lord Jesus Christ dwelt in His Mother's womb, where she ministered to Him the matter of His holy Body ? Was it not

[1] Cf. Colos. i. 16, 18.

also a holy dwelling where our Lord Jesus Christ and our Lady, His Mother, and Joseph dwelt together in one house, where our Lady served her blessed Son Jesus Christ with meat and drink and clothes? Full pleasant was that service before Him and before all the Blessed Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. It is also a holy dwelling where God's servants dwell together in one congregation and in one charity; for there is our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst among them, as He Himself says in His Gospel [1]; and there our Lady ministered her help and grace full busily that they may serve her Son to His pleasure" [2].

HYMN.

*Ave maris stella,
 Dei Mater alma,
 Atque semper Virgo,
 Felix cæli porta.*

*Sumens illud Ave
 Gabriélis ore,
 Funda nos in pace,
 Mutans Hevæ nomen.*

*Solve vincla reis,
 Profer lumen cæcis,
 Mala nostra pelle,
 Bona cuncta posce.*

*Monstra te esse matrem,
 Sumat per te preces,
 Qui pro nobis natus,
 Tulit esse tuus.*

*Virgo singuláris
 Inter omnes mitis,
 Nos culpís solútos
 Mites fac et castos.*

*Gentle star of ocean,
 Portal of the sky,
 Ever Virgin-mother
 Of the Lord most high.*

*O by Gabriel's Ave,
 Uttered long ago,
 Eva's name reversing
 'Stablish peace below!*

*Break the captive's fetters,
 Light on blindness pour;
 All our ills expelling.
 Every bliss implore.*

*Show thyself a Mother;
 Offer Him our sighs,
 Who for us incarnate
 Did not thee despise.*

*Virgin of all Virgins!
 To thy shelter take us;
 Gentlest of the gentle!
 Chaste and gentle make us.*

*Vitam præsta puram,
Iter para tutum,
Ut videntes Jesum
Semper collætémur.*

*Still, as on our journey,
Help our weak endeavour ;
Till with thee and Jesus,
We rejoice for ever.*

*Sit laus Deo Patri,
Summo Christo decus,
Spiritu sancto,
Tribus honor unus.*

*Through the highest heavens,
To the Almighty Three,
Father, Son, and Spirit,
One same glory be.*

Amen.

Amen.

*¶. Diffûsa est grátia in
lábiiis tuis.*

*Grace is poured forth on thy lips.
Wherefore hath God blessed*

*℞. Proptérea benedixit te thee for ever.
Deus in ætérnum.*

On this Hymn the pious author of the *Myroure* thus comments :—

“In the first verse you praise our Lady for four things. One is that she is called ‘star of the sea’; for as that is comfortable to ship-men, so is our Lady comfort to all that are in bitterness of tribulation or temptation in the sea of this world [1]. And therefore her name, *Maria*, is as much as to say, ‘star of the sea.’ And so *Ave Maria* and *Ave Maris stella* is all one sentence. The second is that she is the Mother of God. The third is that she is everlasting Virgin. The fourth is that she is the gate of heaven. Her Son called Himself in His Gospel, *the Door* [2]; for as a man may not well come into a house but by the door, nor to the door but by the gate, so may there none come in to heaven but by our Lord Jesus

[1] Says St. Bernard: “O whoever thou art, who knows that thou art tossed in the flood of this world amidst its storms and tempests, turn not thine eyes away from the shining of this Star, unless thou wishest to be overwhelmed in the storms. If the waves of temptation rise up, if thou founder on the rock of temptation, look up at the Star, call upon Mary. If thou struggle with the waves of pride, ambition, distraction, envy, look at the Star, call upon Mary. If wrath or avarice, or sensuality, shake the boat of thy mind, look to Mary. If terrified at the enormity of thy crimes and confused at the filth of thy conscience, thou art struck with fear of the Judge, and begin to sink into the depths of sorrow and slough of despond, think of Mary. In perils, in difficulties, in doubts, think of Mary, call upon Mary.”—*Hom. 2, super Missus est.*

[2] John x. 9.

Christ, that is, the Door ; nor to our Lord Jesus Christ but by our Lady, that is, the Gate. Therefore you say thus to her, *Ave Maris stella*—Hail star of the sea, holy Mother of God, and always Virgin, the blessed Gate of heaven.

“In the second verse ye praise our Lady for two things, and one thing ye ask of her. For ye thank her that she assented to the greeting of Gabriel, for thereby began our salvation ; like as our perdition began by the assent of Eve to the fiend. . . . The second, for she hath turned that woe that Eve brought us into joy. And so she hath changed her name *Eva* into *Ave* ; for *Eva* spelt backwards maketh *Ave*, and *Eva* is as much as to say, Woe, and *Ave* is a word of joy. Then ye ask of her stability of peace, and say thus : Taking that *Ave* of the mouth of Gabriel, ground us in peace, changing the name of Eve.

“In the third verse ye ask of her four things that man needeth to have help in, after he has fallen into sin. For by sin he falleth into four great mischiefs, one is that he is so bound therein that he may not of himself come out thereof. And as a man may yield himself bound to a lord, but he may not be free again when he will, right so is it of a man that maketh himself thrall to the fiend by deadly sin. And therefore ye pray our Lady that she will loose the bonds of sinners and make them free. Another mischief is that when a man is fallen into deadly sin, the fiend blindeth him so in his sight that he can neither see the peril in which he standeth in nor how to get him help of deliverance. And therefore in this ye ask our Lady’s help. The third mischief is the great vengeance that man deserveth by sin, both temporal and everlasting. And the fourth is the loss of all goods of grace and glory. And therefore against all these four mischiefs ye pray to our Lady and say : Loose thou the bands of them that are guilty, for the first. Give them light to them that are blind, for the second. Do away our evils, for the third. And ask all goods, for the fourth.

“In the fourth verse ye pray her to show herself a Mother to God and to the wretched. As a mother tendeth her child in all manner of perils and diseases that he is in, so she vouchsafes to show motherly tenderness to us in all our needs,

bodily and ghostly. And as a mother may get of her son what she will reasonably desire of him, so she vouchsafed to speed our errands before God that it may appear well that that she is His Mother. Therefore ye say thus to her : Show thyself to be a Mother, and He must take prayers by thee That vouchsafed to be thy Son for us.

“In the fifth verse ye praise her in two virtues, that is, maidenhood and mildness ; and ye ask of her three virtues according to the same, that is, deliverance from sin, meekness and chastity. Therefore ye say thus : Singular and mild Virgin amongst all, make us loosed from sin, and mild and chaste.

“In the sixth verse ye ask of her three things. The first is clean life. The second is true continuance therein unto the end that you may then have true passage. And the third is endless joy in the sight and beholding of God. Therefore you say : Grant us clean life, make ready a true way, that we, seeing Jesus, may evermore be glad.

“In the seventh verse ye praise the Blessed Trinity and say : Praising be to God the Father ; to highest Christ be glory ; and to the Holy Ghost ; One honour to the Three [1]. Amen.”

The Versicle and Response are these favourite words so often repeated in this office. See the Versicle at the end of each of the three Nocturns, and Psalm xlv. 3 in the second Nocturn.

THE ANTIPHON AT THE MAGNIFICAT.

*Beáta Mater et intacta
Virgo, gloriósa Regina mundi,
intercede pro nobis ad Dómi-
num.*

*Blessed Mother and Maiden
undefiled, Glorious Queen of
the world, intercede for us to
the Lord.*

We now reach the culminating point of Vespers. The *Myroure* gives us the following reasons for the *Magnificat* at Vespers : “One for in the Evensong time of the world our

[1] The Doxology given here is a translation of the one used in the Office. The one given in the *Myroure* varies somewhat from the Roman use.

Lady, by her singular assent, brought health to mankind. Another cause is that we should daily have in mind the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was wrought in the eventide of the world, for joy of which this song is made. The third cause is for our Lord is likened to appear in the eventide. The fourth cause is that the minds that have been laboured and wearied in the day with many thoughts and businesses should then be comforted with the song of joy of our Lady and be helped by her prayers against temptations of the night."

Explaining some of the ceremonial observances connected with this hour, Durandus says: To represent the rejoicing expressed in this Canticle, lights are lit at Vespers; either because the Canticle is of the Gospel, or that we, being of the number of the wise virgins, may run with the lamp of good works in the odour of the ointment of the Blessed Virgin, entering with her into the joy of our Lord. And because our works are not radiant in lamps, except they be moulded by love, therefore the Canticle closes with the Antiphon whereby love is signified.

Incense is offered at the *Magnificat* [1]; and Origen thus explains its use: Behold how our High Priest standeth and offereth Himself, to separate the living from the dead. Rise to the loftier heights of His Word, and behold how the very High Priest, Jesus Christ, having assumed the censer of human flesh and set therein the fire of the Altar, that is, the glorious Soul wherewith He was born according to His Human Nature, and adding thereunto the incense, which is His Immaculate Spirit, stood between the living and the dead and suffered death to rule us no longer.

The preliminary Antiphon directs our minds towards her whose song we are about to sing, so that we may enter into all her dispositions. Our ever dear and blessed Lady ever kept singing in her heart the *Magnificat*. Even in the hour

[1] The solemn incensing of the altar, which typifies our Lord, is reserved to the priest when officiating at the Office. But there is nothing to prevent incense being burnt at the *Magnificat* in a choir of nuns. The smoking thurible set in the midst of the choir at the *Magnificat* would preserve the symbolism of the "Hour of Incense."

of her deepest sorrow she was magnifying the Lord Who had done great things for her. And we, with our *Magnificat*, in days of trial, sorrow and gloom, must never forget His mercy towards us, or lose that inward joy which inspired this heavenly Canticle. Let us therefore apply the words to ourselves and sing it with the love, gratitude and humility our Lady had, when at the Visitation she was greeted by St. Elizabeth as, *Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb* [1], and accepted the blessing but referred it all to her Maker. Let us read the Gospel narrative of the Visitation :—

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; and entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elizabeth. And it came to pass that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said: Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? For lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the babe leapt in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be fulfilled those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said [2]:—

(1) <i>Magnificat ánima mea</i>	<i>My soul doth magnify the</i>
<i>Dóminum:</i>	<i>Lord:</i>

(2) <i>Et exultávit spíritus</i>	<i>And my spirit hath rejoiced</i>
<i>meus in Deo salutári meo.</i>	<i>in God my Saviour.</i>

“Here,” says the *Myroure*, “we may learn of our Lady to forsake all vain joy. For after the Angel had been with her from heaven, after she had conceived the Son of God, and after Elizabeth had blessed her and praised her as most worthy Mother of God, in all this she was moved to no vanity, or to no presumption in herself, but to more meekness and to praising and rejoicing in God. And that not feignedly, only with the tongue, but of all the inwardness of soul. And therefore she saith not my mouth, but *my soul* praiseth and *my spirit* rejoiceth. And that not in herself but *in God* Who is Maker of all things and now is become Man and so *Saviour* of

[1] Luke i. 42.

[2] Luke i. 39-46.

mankind, and also that of our Lady. And therefore He is specially and singularly her Saviour [on account of the pre-eminent grace of the Immaculate Conception], and none other in that wise. For by her health and salvation are come to Man. Therefore she saith *my spirit*, that is, my soul, hath joyed in God my Saviour: Here saith St. Bede, we note that his spirit joyeth in God his Saviour who delighteth in nothing that is on earth, neither is pleased with plenty of goods or of worship, nor is broken with grudging or impatience in any tribulation or disease, but only delighteth and joyeth in mind of his Maker, of Whom he hopeth to have endless health."

(3) *Quia respexit humilitatem ancillæ Suæ: ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes.*

For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden: for lo! from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

"Here our Lady telleth why she praised, why she joyed in God, why God was so singularly hers. For He beheld her meekness, whereby you may see that meekness was the cause why God chose her to be His mother. And therefore, says St. Jerome, what is more noble and worthy than to be the Mother of God? What is more bright and worshipful than she whom the brightness of the Father's glory chose to Himself? What is more chaste than she that bore in her body the Body of Christ? And yet she saith that God beheld only her meekness that is the keeper of all virtues. And what follows thereupon: *Lo! from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.* All generations of heaven and of earth, of Christians and of heathen, of Jews and of Saracens, of men and of women, of poor and of rich, of men and of angels, of right-wise and of sinners, of wedded and of single, of sovereigns and of subjects; all shall say me *blessed*, all shall praise the blessedness that God, my Saviour, hath wrought with me and hath given to them by me. For of every nation and people some are turned to the faith of Christ, [and] praise His holy Mother."

(4) *Quia fecit mihi magna Qui potens est: et sanctum Nomen Ejus.*

For He that is mighty hath done great things to me: and holy is His Name.

"What be these great things that He did to her? That He kept her clean from all sin. That He hallowed her and endowed her with gifts of the Holy Ghost; that He took His body from her. That she a creature brought forth her Maker; she His servant bore her Lord; that she a Virgin is Mother of God. That by her He purchased mankind and brought His chosen to endless life. These great things did He *that is mighty* to reward above all that any man may deserve. And as *He is mighty* He hath done mighty and *great things*, and *Holy is His Name*; for He is more good and holy than may be thought or spoken. And for His holy Name, not for man's merits, hath He done *great things* for the health of man."

(5) *Et misericórdia Ejus a
progénie in progénies : timentibus Eum.*

*And His mercy is from
generation unto generation : to
them that fear Him.*

"This is that *mercy* that He hath wrought by our Lady and by His Incarnation and Passion to mankind. The *mercy* of salvation that David asked after when he said : *Lord show us Thy mercy* [1]; as if he said : Thou hast shown Thy power in making all things out of nothing; Thou hast shown us Thy wisdom in marvellously governing all things; Thou hast shown us Thy righteousness in punishing sinners both in angels and in men; and therefore show us now Thy *mercy*, by the Incarnation of Thy Son for the Salvation of mankind. This *mercy* bringeth our Lady forth and saith : *His mercy is from generation unto generation*. From one kindred unto kindred, from the kindred of the Jews unto all kindreds of the world. For amongst the Jews Thy *mercy* was wrought, and afterwards spread abroad unto all people. But all take not profit and salvation by this *mercy*; for though it be more sufficient that all men needeth, yet it availeth not but to them that dispose themselves thereto. And what is that disposition? The fear of God; for without that fear none may be saved. Not the fear of pain, but the fear of God; as our Lady saith : *His mercy is to them that fear Him.*"

(6) *Fecit poténtiam in brá-
chio Suo : dispérsit superbos
mente cordis Sui.*

*He hath done might in His
arm : He hath scattered the
proud in the will of His heart.* [1]

"That is to say, His Son. For as the *arm* cometh from the body and the hand from both arm and body, so the Son hath His being from the Father, and the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son. In this *arm*, that is, His Son, He *hath done might*; for by Him He hath made all things, and by Him He hath saved mankind, and by Him He hath thrown down the power of fiends. And therefore saith our Lady : *He hath scattered the proud in the will of His heart.* These *proud* are fiends, and Jews are all proud people. For as a host that is dispersed is not mighty to fight, right so the proud fiends are dispersed by the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ and not mighty to war against Man as they were before. The proud Jews also that would not humble themselves to the faith of Jesus Christ are dispersed abroad in the world, so much that they have neither land nor country, nor city, nor town to dwell in all the earth. But some dwell in one land and some in another, and some in one city and some in another, under tribute and thralldom of Christian people. Thus are these fiends and Jews dispersed by our Lord *in the will of His heart*, that is to say, in the rightful judgment of His privy Doom. All proud people also are dispersed in the mind of their own heart; for as meek people live in unity and rest, right so proud people are both scattered in their own hearts by many vanities and unlawful desires, and also they are divided against others by trouble and envy and debate."

(7) *Depósuit poténtes de
sede : et exaltávit húmiles.*

*He hath put down the mighty
from their seat : and hath
exalted the lowly.*

"These *mighty* are they that have great power, temporal or spiritual, and misuse it against the Will of God, and against their fellow Christians, and against their own soul's health. And these *mighty* God throweth down from the *seat* of Grace; for by grace God should have His seat in their hearts; and from the *seat* of dignity and power which they misuse; and

[1] This is the old pre-reformation English translation of the Vulgate. Both St. Augustine and the Carthusian follow this reading instead of the more usual *their hearts*.

from the *seat* of knowledge and wisdom, for they are blinded in their own malice ; and at last from the *seat* of Doom where the apostolic power shall sit and judge with Christ them that shall be judged at the end of the world [1]. From that *seat* shall such mighty be thrown down, and to that *seat* shall the lowly be lifted up. For He hath lifted up the meek here in grace and afterwards to bliss everlasting. These words our Lady spoke as prophecy of things to come, and yet she saith as if the fulfilling were passed ; for it was as sure to be fulfilled in time to come as if it had been already past. And for that cause prophets used often such manner of speaking."

(8) *Esuriēntes implēvit bonis :* The hungry He hath filled
et diuites dimisit inānes. with good things : and the rich
He hath sent empty away.

“Bodily hunger is an appetite for meat, so ghostly hunger is a desire of grace and of virtue. He that is *hungry* hath need of meat ; so he that is spiritually *hungry* thinketh that he hath nought that is good, namely, not of himself nor by his own merits. And because he feeleth himself needy of all goods, therefore he seeketh and desireth and laboureth fast to get them. And such *hungry* (ones) God filleth with goods spiritual in grace and endless in bliss. But the *rich* are they that presume of themselves and think themselves to be better than they are, and to have more than they have, or to know more than they can. And what they have, or can, or may, they count it to their own merits and worthiness as though it all came from themselves. These *rich* (ones) God leaveth *empty* of grace and glory. For they that are here wilfully poor of worldly wealth and comfort, and hunger and desire God’s grace and heavenly comforts, their desire shall be fulfilled ; but they that have here riches, and worldly property and take their joyous comforts therein and seek after none other, they shall be left void from all goods temporal and everlasting.”

(9) <i>Suscépit Israel puerum</i>	<i>He hath taken Israel His</i>
<i>Suum : recordátus misericórdiæ</i>	<i>servant : being mindful of His</i>
<i>Suæ.</i>	<i>mercy.</i>

“Israel was one of the patriarchs that was called Jacob, of whose lineage our Lady came. And therefore she saith

that God *hath taken Israel*, that is to say, a Body of mankind, of the lineage of *Israel*; which *Israel* is called God's *child* for He was meek and obedient to God as a child to His father. And in this deed God hath *been mindful of His mercy*, by which He promised to the patriarchs and prophets that He would become Man. And therefore saith our Lady further :—

(10) <i>Sicut locútus est ad</i>	<i>As He spoke to our fathers :</i>
<i>patres nostros : Abraham et</i>	<i>to Abraham and to his seed for</i>
<i>sémini ejus in sæcula.</i>	<i>ever.</i>

“That is, to Abraham and to the people that came from Abraham by bodily generation, of whom came our Lady, and from her our Lord Jesus Christ, not only to the help of that people, but of all that truly follow the faith and living of Abraham unto the end of the world. For they are properly called the *seed* and the children of Abraham with whom they should be partners of the fruit of our Lord's coming endlessly in joy and bliss. Amen.” [1].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who regardeth the lowliness of His handmaiden. Glory to the Son Who is God her Saviour. Glory to the Holy Ghost Who hath done great things to her.

The *Kyrie* and Versicle as at Lauds (see page 303).

THE COLLECT.

Concede nos fámulos Tuos, quæsumus Dómine Deus, perpétua mentis et córporis sanitáte gaudére : et gloriósa beatæ Mariæ semper Virginis intercessióne, a præsénti liberári tristitia et æterna pérfrui lætítia. Per Christum Dóminum nostrum. R. Amen.

Grant us Thy servants, we beseech, O Lord God, to rejoice in perpetual health in soul and body : and, by the glorious intercession of the Blessed Mary ever a Virgin, to be delivered from present sorrow and to attain eternal glory. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Perpetual health of soul and body. That is all we need for keeping our soul in God's favour, and our body fit to do the

work He allots us. It is the same idea as the words in the Hymn, *Bona cuncta posce* : Ask for us all good things. *Present sorrow* is the need of this health of soul and body, sin and the various ills of life which impede us from serving God with a pure heart. *Eternal joy* is that state when our joy shall be made full and no man can take it from us ; the joy which here below was intermittent, which never ends or fades ; the joy which the God of all joy has prepared for them that love Him.

Vespers, like Lauds, ends with the Commemoration of the Saints and the Versicles (see page 304).

During Advent.

The Antiphons for the Psalms are the same as at Lauds for this season. Also the Little Chapter. The Hymn and Versicle is as above. The Collect is that of Lauds, and the Commemoration of the Saints follows the same (see page 308).

During Christmas-tide.

The Antiphons for the Psalms are as at Lauds during this season. The Little Chapter is from the Common. The Hymn and Versicle are from the Common, but the Antiphon at the Magnificat is proper (see page 311).

Magnum hereditatis mysterium ; templum Dei factus est úterus nescientis virum : non est pollútus ex ea carnem assumens. Omnes gentes vénient dicéntes : Glória tibi Dómine.

A great mystery of inheritance : the womb of one not knowing man becomes the temple of God : taking flesh from her He is not defiled. All the Gentiles shall come, saying : Glory be to Thee, O Lord.

God's *inheritance* is the hearts of His people ; and in order to win it unto Himself He wrought the *great mystery* of the Incarnation. The Jews and Gentiles form the inhabitants of this *inheritance* and they all came testifying to the new-born King. The shepherds first, led on by the angels' song of *Gloria in excelsis Deo* ; and the three Wise Men who came from afar

to worship, with mystic gifts, Him Who was born King of the Jews.

The prayer is from Lauds and the Commemoration of the Saints that of the Common.

During Paschal Time.

The Antiphon at the *Magnificat* is *Regina cæli*, for which see after Compline.

CHAPTER IX.

AT COMPLINE, OR NIGHT-SONG.

The end of our day has arrived, and before seeking rest we come once more for our Father's blessing, and to pay the last tribute of love to our Mother. This Office, says the *Myroure*, "is the seventh and the last hour of Divine Service, and it is as much as to say, a 'fulfilling' ; for in the end thereof the seven hours of Divine service are fulfilled ; and therewith also is ended and fulfilled speaking, eating, and drinking, and labouring, and all bodily business. So that after that time ought to be great stillness and strict silence, not only from words, but also from all noises and deeds save only quiet and private prayer, and holy thinking and bodily sleep. For Compline betokens the end of Man's life, or the end of the world when the chosen of our Lord shall be delivered from all travail and woe and be brought to endless quiet and rest. And therefore each person ought to dispose himself to bedward as if his bed were his grave. For as a man dieth or he be born to his grave and buried, right so at Compline tyme ye should be disposed as if ye were dying. And keep ye so sober and still afterwards as if ye were dead for all bodily deeds and words" [1].

The Office of Compline is due to St. Benedict, who made it the night prayer for his monks. The present office, however, dispenses with the monastic introduction of conference and mutual confession. Like the old English use of Sarum, it starts at once after a preparatory *Ave* with the following Versicles :—

℣. *Converte nos Deus salu-
táris noster.*

℞. *Et avérte iram Tuam
a nobis.*

℣. *Deus adjutórium, &c.*

*Turn us O God our Salva-
tion.*

*And turn away Thine anger
from us.*

*O God come to my assist-
ance, &c.*

This Office, says Durandus, begins contrary to the manner of the other hours ; for, because as we have been, as it were, singing Psalms all day, and it is well-nigh impossible but that we should have contracted some dust of pride, therefore we humble ourselves, saying : *Turn us O God our Salvation* ; for, says the Apostle : *If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves* [1]. . . . We then proceed to call on the Divine help, saying : *O God come to my assistance. Turn us* refers to the taking away of past sins ; *O God come* to the doing of future good works . . . And because all is done in praise of the Blessed Trinity, therefore follows the *Gloria* [2].

This is followed by three more of the "Gradual Psalms," which we may say in honour of the Blessed Trinity and of our Lady's relationship to the Divine Persons.

PSALM CXXVIII.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ routs those who fight against us, lest we should be hurt by them. The voice of the Church. This tenth step contains the voice of Christ against the Jews who, fighting against Him on the Cross, are shown to have done Him no hurt, because it proved that He rose again from the dead.

Venerable Bede : Endurance in suffering is counselled in this tenth step. In the first paragraph the Prophet counsels Jerusalem to say what conflicts and fights she has endured from her enemies, lest any of the faithful should despair

[1] 1 John i. 8.

[2] See also the explanation of this verse in the second Psalm at Prime, p. 322.

because of his own troubles. In the second he prays in parables against the enemies of the Church that there may come upon them that which he knows will happen in the future Judgment.

(1) *Sæpe expugnavérunt me
a juventúte mea : dicat nunc
Israel.*

*Many a time have they
fought against me from my
youth up : may Israel now say.*

(2) *Sæpe expugnavérunt me
a juventúte mea : etenim non
portuérunt mihi.*

*Yea, many a time have they
vexed me from my youth up :
but they have not prevailed
against me.*

St. Augustine applies these words to the true Israel, the Church, in her struggles against sin from the Fall of Man, yet in his early youth ; from the days of the righteous Abel, and in the early days of the Christian Dispensation. And it is true of the Head as it was of His members ; for He was sought after as the King of Israel, by Herod to slay Him in the Cradle ; driven by necessity into Egypt ; harrassed by the incessant plots of His enemies ; and, finally, was put to death. It holds good, says St. Bruno, of every saint who, having put off the Old Man with his works and put on the New, has begun in this wise a spiritual youth ; for at once he becomes the mark for the hatred of the doer of iniquity.

Many a time ; for, adds St. Hilary, when once the Tempter is overcome he does not therefore leave us, but returns and tries again and again to conquer.

But they have not prevailed against me ; for, says St. Peter : *Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good* [1] ; and St. Paul adds : *If God be for us who can be against us ?* [2].

(3) *Supra dorsum meum
fabricavérunt peccatóres : pro-
longavérunt iniquitátem suam.*

*Sinners have wrought upon
my back : they have prolonged
their iniquity.*

The figure which commentators have seen in the words is a mass of precious metal lying on the anvil and beaten out into greater breadth and length by the hammers of the smith

[1] 1 Peter iii. 13.

[2] Rom. viii. 31.

until a costly vessel is produced by their labour. Some have it that the mention of the *back* implies what does not show itself before the face; and thus secret injury, calumny, and detraction; but St. Augustine's view, that it is the sense of meekly bearing a burthen, seems to suit better with the mention of open violence in the preceding verses.

(4) *Dóminus justus concídit
servíces peccatórum : confun-
dántur et convertántur retrór-
sum, omnes qui odérunt Sion.*

*But the righteous Lord hath
broken the neck's of the ungodly :
let them be confounded and
turned backward, all they who
hate Sion.*

St. Augustine sees here the punishment of the proud and stiff-necked enemies of God's Church who refuse to bear His easy yoke, and loudly proclaim that they have done no wrong. The latter clause admits of a twofold interpretation : the one stern and literal, of a sense of punishment in this world and in the next; and in the other more gentle, which hints at repentance, reclaiming the sinner, and withdrawing him from the broad road leading to destruction, thus changing him from a rebel into a servant.

(5) *Fiant sicut fœnum tect-
órum : quod priúsqvam evel-
látur, exáruit.*

*Let them be even as the grass
upon the house-tops : which
withereth away afore it be
plucked up.*

(6) *De quo non implévit
manum suam qui metit : et
sinum suum qui manípulos
còlligit.*

*Wherewith the mower filleth
not his hand : nor he that
bindeth sheaves his bosom.*

St. Gregory the Great says : That as grass growing on the roof has no firm root, so a hypocrite while making a show of doing great things is not established; for his heart is not sincere. And as grass on the roof withers before it can be rooted up, so, when a hypocrite undertakes any good work, without first making his conscience right, he loses all the merit thereof, and shows he was flourishing without a root. Upon which St. Augustine remarks it were wiser to grow lower down and thrive better. Such as these, proud, violent, hypocrites, unlike those sheaves the angel-mowers carry back rejoicing

from the field of this world, shall be left in the field, as they have borne no fruit and are fit for nothing but to be burnt. But, says Haymo, those who have passed their life in good deeds shall be led by the hands of the Mower, and those who have served God in contemplation shall be carried in angels' bosoms to their heavenly rest.

(7) *Et non dixerunt qui præteribant, Benedictio Domini super vos : benediximus vobis in Nomine Domini.*

And they that passed by have not said, The blessing of the Lord be upon you : we have blessed you in the Name of the Lord.

That is, remarks St. Augustine, as the mowers will take no heed of the worthless grass on the house-tops, there will be nothing to attract the passers-by, or draw from them a blessing. *They that pass by* are our fellow-pilgrims in this world who bless by their prayers those who help them along the way by giving a good example. It is especially here taken of the Prophets and Apostles who do not bless those whom they see striving after worldly honours and lacking the love of God which is the root of all real good. So, says the Carthusian, the teachers of the Old Law have no blessings, but only warnings and threats for their people if they refuse to hear their King and reject Sion, His new Covenant. Perez takes the whole Psalm as a prophecy of the rejection of the Synagogue, and compares its ceremonial law, bearing no fruit of itself, to grass on the house-top, withering away from want of grace and not being planted in the rich soil of the foundation which is our Lord. St. Hilary ends up his commentary on this Psalm with this advice : Let us, then, sow profitably, that we may make our labours ready for filling both hands and bosom and become sharers of that blessing of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who ever protects Israel. Glory to the Son, the Mower Who bears us in His bosom. Glory to the Holy Ghost Who blesseth His people.

PSALM CXXIX. [1].

Title.—A Song of Degrees.*Argument.*

Tomasi : That Christ may grant us forgiveness of our sins without marking our iniquities. The voice of Christ and of the Church. This Psalm is to be read with the Prophet Jonas. Wherefore this eleventh step denotes the voice of St. Peter weeping bitterly after his fall ; hence it is that of repenting sinners.

Venerable Bede : The Prophet, placed on the eleventh step, prostrates himself to fulfil his penance, because no saint, so long as he is in the flesh, can be entirely free from sin. And this, too, is to be said, that every sin belongs, as it were, to the number eleven, because it over-passes the perfection of the Ten Commandments. The Prophet cries to the Lord for deliverance out of the depths of sin and from the troubles he experiences. Then, without delay, he comes to the joys of thanksgiving, that penitents may know with what favour they will be received, and how soon the remedy is bestowed on them.

(1) <i>De profundis clamavi</i>	<i>Out of the depths I have</i>
<i>ad Te Dómine : Dómine, exaudi</i>	<i>cried to Thee, O Lord : O Lord,</i>
<i>vocem meam.</i>	<i>hear my voice.</i>

Out of the depths. A cry of the Jews from *the depths* of their Captivity, seemingly without hope ; for, as says St. Augustine, it is the cry of any one trying to ascend out of the abyss of sin ; even as Jonas cried unto the Lord out of the belly of the great fish [2]. *The depths* in which we find ourselves are *the depths* of this world. All who realise that they are in this abyss cry, groan, and sigh till they be freed from it, and come to Him Who sitteth over all the depths and upon

[1] This Psalm, the eleventh Gradual Psalm, St. Augustine tells us, consisting as it does of eight verses, teaches that no man can so live throughout the perfect term of his working life here (denoted by the Six Days of Creation) without transgressing the Ten Commandments, and so pass on to Eleven, the symbol of evil ; but that by persevering in penance and prayer the sinner may at last reach that Octave of the Resurrection, when Christ shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

[2] Jonas ii. 1.

the Cherubim. Whence, then, does this cry come? *Out of the depths.* Who is it that cries? A sinner. And with what hope does he cry? Because He Who came to loose the bonds of sin hath also given hope even to a sinner in the depths of his iniquity. Man must needs call, too, out of the depths of humility, recognising the abyss of misery into which he is plunged, and call upon *the depths* of God's mercy: *Depth calleth upon depth* [1]. Note, too, says St. Gregory the Great, it is not written "I am calling," but *I have called*, showing us thereby not to end our prayer until by perseverance it has been granted. God loves to be asked, to be constrained, to be overcome, as it were, by importunity; for the loving repetition of His Name marks the affection and confidence of His client. It has been pointed out that this verse puts before us six conditions of a good prayer—it is humble, *out of the depths*; fervent, *have I cried*; direct to God, *unto Thee*; reverent, *O Lord*; awed, *Lord* repeated; one's very own, *hear my prayer*. This Psalm is used so frequently for the Dead that a reference here to it in that sense will not be out of place. It is the prayer of souls abiding in the depths of Purgatory, overwhelmed with the sense of their own impurity and imploring the Lord to take them to His rest.

(2) *Fiant aures Tuæ intendentes : in vocem deprecationis meæ.*

Let Thine ears be attentive : to the voice of my supplication.

It is not enough to be heard, says Bellarmine, that we should cry aloud; He Who is called upon must also listen. It is true God sees and hears everything; but when He remains silent it seems as though He heard not. So the Psalmist in the vehemence of his desire beseeches God to turn an *attentive* ear to his cry and grant him speedily his petition. God, says the Carmelite, is said to bow down His ear, that is, His readiness and mercy, to us; but we, on the other hand, are to lift up ours to Him. And it is to be noted that the form of the human ear teaches three silent lessons: It is always open, not like the eyes or lips, signifying we should

be more ready to hear than to see or speak ; it is small, not like that of the brute animals, warning us to take heed how we hear, and not to believe everything that is spoken ; it is erect because we ought to listen for words coming from heaven rather than from earth.

(3) *Si iniquitâtes observâ- If Thou shalt mark iniqui-*
veris : Dômine quis sustinêbit ? ties : Lord, who shall abide it ?

No man is safe from sins, which howl around him like angry beasts ; none is of spotless conscience, none pure of heart because of his own righteousness. When God marks down in the Book of Doom all our sins and reads them out, *who shall abide it*, that is, endure the shame and the guilt ? Wherefore we beseech God not to act as Judge only, but to exert as King His prerogatives of mercy, and add :—

(4) *Quia apud Te propi- For there is with Thee for-*
tiatio est : et propter legem giveness : because of Thy Law
Tuam sustinui Te Dômine. I have waited for Thee, O Lord.

If Thou wast strict in judgment, and punishment fell swift upon the sin, all would perish. Therefore if Thou desirest to be feared, forgive, and drive not sinners into despair, wherein they cease to fear because they have lost all. *There is with Thee forgiveness*, since *He Who is the propitiation for our sins* [1] is seated in glory at Thy right hand.

Because of Thy Law : God's Law, by which He rules us now, is Mercy and Love ; confiding in this the Psalmist awaits His Coming, though well aware of his own unworthiness to abide it. *I have waited* patiently, bearing all chastisement *because of Thy Law*, knowing that Thou actest righteously and mercifully in all things, and in judgment forgetteth not mercy.

(5) *Sustinuit ânima mea My soul hath relied on His*
in Verbo Ejus : sperâvit ânima Word : my soul hath hoped
mea in Dômino. in the Lord.

(6) *A custôdia matutina From the morning watch*
usque ad noctem : speret Israel even until the night : let Israel
in Dômino. hope in the Lord.

God has promised mercy through the Incarnation and Sacrifice of the Word, His only-begotten Son; and the Psalmist declares that he is relying upon a promise which can never fail.

From the morning watch even until the night. St. Augustine takes these words of the trust of the Church in Christ from the early morning of His Resurrection until that Night in which no man can work [1], which is to be followed by that other Resurrection Morning for us all. Others take it of the breaking of the Light of Faith upon the soul till the close of life, working, as St. Hilary says, through all the burthen and heat of the day until the Reward we know is awaiting us is bestowed.

(7) *Quia apud Dóminum misericórdia : et copiósa apud Eum redémptio.*

For with the Lord there is mercy : and with Him plentiful redemption.

Says Cassiodorus on this glorious verse : Here is the reason for Israel to hope in the Lord : because in His hand is Mercy which can make the sinner righteous, the weak strong, and give to the carnal the purity of angels. There is also the *plentiful redemption* which is the Precious Blood stored up for us in the Church and ready to do its healing work at every turn of our life. Daily and hourly It is being offered in the Sacrifice of the Mass on our behalf to the Eternal Father ; daily It is washing away Original Sin and Actual Sin ; daily It is giving grace to all men by the Sacraments of the New Law, the channels by which It is brought to the soul. This Precious Blood gives the force and the Divine influence to all the Sacramentals of the Church, and covers her and all her members with a blood-stained robe, so that she can say to Her Head, Jesus, : *Thou art a Spouse of blood to me* [2]. It is this Blood pleading for forgiveness and shed so abundantly in the Passion which is the *plentiful Redemption* which our good God in His mercy hath arranged for us.

(8) *Et Ipse rédimet Israel : ex ómnibus iniquitátibus ejus.*

And He Himself shall redeem Israel : from all his iniquities.

[1] John ix. 4.

[2] Exod. iv. 25.

No one else but God is our Redeemer ; as the prophet said : *God Himself will come and will save you* [1]. Before He came on His errand of mercy the name of *Saviour* was given to Him : *Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins* [2].

From all his iniquities : not from temporal captivity and suffering, which is our appointed share in the work of release, but from the more bitter bondage of sin, a work He alone can do. And mark, iniquity is entirely taken away, blotted out : *For He that sitteth on the throne said : Lo, I make all things new* [3].

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father unto Whom we call from the depths. Glory to the Son, His Word in Whom we rely. Glory to the Holy Ghost with Whom there is mercy.

PSALM CXXX.

Title.—A Song of Degrees.

Argument.

Tomasi : That Christ teaches us not to be lifted up in pride. The voice of Christ to the Father. This twelfth step is understood of the Blessed Virgin-mother of Christ and of every soul that rendereth not evil for evil, nor cursing for cursing, but contrariwise. The voice of the Church.

Venerable Bede : After penance comes sweetness. The whole of this Psalm concerns meekness and humility, that the sweetness of glorious devotion may refresh those whom the toil of previous confession hath wearied. In the first part the Prophet appoints a heavy punishment for himself if he does not receive God's command in all humility. In the second he bids Israel hope always in the Lord, that so we may be able to endure all the troubles of the world.

(1) *Dómine non est exaltá-
tum cor meum : neque eláti
sunt óculi mei.*

*Lord, my heart is not
haughty : nor are mine eyes
lifted up.*

[1] Is. xxxv. 4.

[2] Matt. i. 21.

[3] Apoc. xxi. 5.

(2) *Neque ambulavi in magnis: neque in mirabilibus super me.*

I do not walk in great things: nor in things too wonderful for me.

In the first verse there is, says St. Bruno, a confession that only God's grace, not man's inherent strength, has enabled him to climb so far as this degree of ascent from the Valley of Weeping. Here, says Albert the Great, is a check put on inward thoughts of pride, and outward tokens of the same, such as are shown by uplifted glances and proud looks. The Pharisee looked up brazenly and boastingly; the Publican *would not so much as lift up his eyes towards heaven* [1]. In saying *My heart is not haughty*, says St. Augustine, we must understand the Psalmist to say less than he means, for his intent is to declare his heart is contrite and humble, and therefore a sacrifice pleasing to God [2].

I do not walk in great things. But while, as St. Hilary says, it is a very perilous thing to be content with walking in moderate things and not to dwell amidst wonderful things (for God's words are great and He is wonderful in the highest), we must note the words *above me*; for they show how we are to understand the Psalmist. God's commandments are not beyond us, for He said: *This commandment which I command thee, this day, is not above thee, nor far off from thee* [3]. The meaning is clear. We are to be contented with serving God in the Vocation He has called us to, and not waste our time in day dreams about the wonderful things of other Vocations; as, for instance, for a Sister of Mercy to long after the silent, retired life of a Carmelite. The great art of the spiritual life is—to serve God as He wishes, not as we wish. The perfection we have to strive after is the perfection to which He calls us in our Vocation. Everything else is a *wonderful* thing above us. Again, we can take the verse of the homage that Reason pays to Faith. There are doctrines far above the comprehension of our Reason. They are not against it, but simply above it. Faith teaches us these doctrines; and the light of Faith enables us to believe them without doubting. These are *the*

[1] Luke xviii. 13.

[2] Ps. l. 17.

[3] Deut. xxx. 11.

wonderful things that are above us, and the highest and most perfect act of our Reason is to know its own limits and to bow itself to the higher light of Faith.

(3) *Si non humiliter senti-
ebam : sed exáltavi ánimam
meam.*

*If I was not humbly minded :
but exalted my soul.*

(4) *Sicut ablactatus est super
matre sua : ita retribútio in
ánima mea.*

*As a child that is weaned
towards his mother : so be re-
tribution upon my soul.*

If I have been proud let God withdraw nourishment from my soul till it becomes weak, as an infant refused the breast, and unable to take any other food ; or, as it has been taken : Let vengeance cling to me and lie as closely upon me as a babe does upon its mother's breast. But another interpretation, that of St. Bruno of Aste, is deeper and truer : God makes this world, with all its sorrows and disappointments, the training school of His servants ; so that whereas St. Paul saith to his imperfect converts : *I have fed you with milk and not with meat, for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither are ye now able, for ye are yet carnal* [1] ; Isaias, on the other hand, says : *Whom shall He teach knowledge ? And whom shall He make to understand doctrine ? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts* [2]. Here, says the Carmelite, we, newly born in faith, must be nourished with the Milk of Christ's Manhood before we are able to receive the Bread of His Godhead and see Him face to face.

(5) *Speret Israel in Dómino :
ex hoc nunc et usque in sæcu-
lum.*

*Let Israel trust in the Lord :
from this time forth for ever-
more.*

This ending of the Psalm, says Bellarmine, tells us whither true humility tends. The Psalmist, preaching the duty of holiness to the people, does not tell them to look to himself, to follow his teaching, to mould themselves to his will, but, as St. Augustine says, to *trust in the Lord*, and that not for a time only, nor at intervals, but through the whole of life on earth, and through the endless years of eternity.

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who is the Hope of Israel. Glory to the Son Who lay a Child on Mary's breast. Glory to the Holy Ghost in Whose grace we are humble.

With this Psalm ends the recital, in the Little Office, of the Gradual Psalms, to wit, twelve out of fifteen. And it is not without reason that a pause is made here and we rest on the step of humility; for unless we are thoroughly practised in lowliness we shall never ascend the other three which lead into the presence of the King. So the fruit of each day's office is to be more humility as the foundation of all our spiritual life.

The Hymn is *Memento rerum Cónditor*, as at Prime.

THE LITTLE CHAPTER [I].

Ego Mater pulchræ dilectionis et timóris et agnitiónis et sanctæ spei.

Deo Gratias.

Ÿ. Ora pro nobis santa Dei Génitrix.

R. Us digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.

I am the Mother of fair love and of fear and of knowledge and of holy hope.

Thanks be to God.

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

That we may be madeworthy of the promises of Christ.

At the end of the day, when Sleep, the image of Death, awaits us, the Little Chapter comes to complete the work the Psalms have begun in us. It directs us to Mary, who is our example of all the virtues a creature can possess. Faith, Hope, Charity, and the Fear of God are the lessons she teaches us; and in them all is summed up. She is the Mother of the Knowledge of Faith, for without her we can never understand Jesus: Whom to know is Life Eternal [2]. She is the Mother of *hope*; for she is the Mother of Him Who is our Redemption and our Advocate with the Father. She is the Mother of *fair love*; for she is the Mother of the Incarnate Love of God; and she, full of the love of God, loves us as her most dear children in Him. She is also the Mother of *holy fear*; of

[1] Eccle. xxiv. 24.

[2] Cf. John xvii. 3.

reverence and awe for Him Who has done such great things for her. She therefore teaches us Whom to believe in, Whom to hope in, Whom to love, and Whom to fear. So in the Versicle and Response we pray that she, God's Own Mother, may pray for us that we may be made worthy of receiving the promises Her Son has made to those who believe, trust, love, and fear Him.

ANTIPHON.

Sub tuum præsidium confingimus, sancta Dei Génitrix: nostras deprecationes ne despicias in necessitatibus, sed a periculis cunctis libera nos semper Virgo gloriôsa et benedicta.

Beneath thy patronage we fly, O holy Mother of God: despise not our prayers in necessities, but from all dangers deliver us, O ever Virgin, glorious and blessed.

This Antiphon gives the keynote to the Song of departure, the *Nunc Dimittis*. It is under the safe patronage of God's Own Mother that we close our day's course of prayer and praise, and it is holding her hand we ask God to dismiss His servants in peace.

CANTICLE: NUNC DIMITTIS [1].

We sing the Song of Simeon, *Nunc Dimittis*, says Durandus, first, in order that, finding peace after his example, we may attain the true Light which is Christ; secondly, because as holy Simeon said these words, desiring to pass from this life to another, so when we are about to sleep it is as though we were to die; for sleep is an image of death, and by the saying of this hymn we commend ourselves to the Lord. Thirdly, the Song of Simeon is sung in the seventh hour, by reason of the seventh age of the world, that is, rest. And the author of the *Myroure* adds another reason: "For by this Compline is betokened your death and by your going to bed your burial, as I said before; therefore this song is said at Compline rather than at other hours, that ye should every

night be ready to desire death as Simeon did." The reference to *peace* reminds us, too, of our Lord's visit on Easter Evening to His disciples and His gracious salutation, twice repeated : *Peace be unto you* [1].

St. Luke thus tells the history of the Canticle :—[2]

And when the days of her purification according to the Law of Moses were accomplished, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord, (as it is written in the Law of the Lord : Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord [3]), and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. And behold there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel ; and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost that he should not see death before he had seen the Christ of the Lord. And he came by the Spirit into the Temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus to do for Him after the custom of the Law, then took he Him in his arms and blessed God and said :—

(1) <i>Nunc dimittis servum</i>	<i>Lord, now lettest Thou Thy</i>
<i>tuum Domine : secundum</i>	<i>servant depart in peace : accord-</i>
<i>verbum Tuum in pace.</i>	<i>ing to Thy Word.</i>

Says the pious author of the *Myroure* : "This man was now glad to die ; for the very Peace of Mankind was come by Whom he should be brought to endless peace. Before that time all went to hell [4] and knew not when they would be delivered. But this man was surer of his deliverance, for he had his Saviour in his arms, and therefore joyfully he said : *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word* ; to the promise that he should not see death till he had seen the Christ [5]."

Or again, his departure was to be in peace *according to Thy Word* Who is the King of Peace, and our Peace, and Who through His death was to overcome the sharpness thereof.

[1] John xx. 19.

[2] Luke ii. 22-32.

[3] Exod. xiii. 2.

[4] That is to *hell* in the same sense as in Creed : *He descended into hell, i.e., Limbo.*

[5] pp. 170-171.

(2) *Quia vidérunt óculi mei:* *For mine eyes have seen: Thy*
salutare Tuum. *salvation.*

“That was the same Child that he bore in his arms, which was and is the Saviour of all His true people. Him he saw with his bodily eyes in His Manhood, and Him he saw with his ghostly eyes by faith after His Godhead” [1].

Thus were the words of the Holy Ghost fulfilled. The promise was kept, and the old man had nought else to live for. He had seen *Thy salvation*, that *salvation* in which he was to share; and he had seen Him in the arms of that Virgin-mother, whose heart he foresaw was to be riven with sorrow.

(3) *Quod parásti: antefáciem* *Which Thou hast prepared:*
ómnium populórum. *before the face of all people.*

“He that is before a man’s face may be easily seen. So the faith and knowledge of our Saviour Jesus Christ was made open to him by His Apostles before all people. And therefore at the Last Doom He shall be seen in His Manhood as a merciful Saviour to all that in faith, and in dread, and in love behold Him there before their face. And to all others that turn their backs to Him here, by misbelief or deadly sin, and so die, He shall be seen as a most fearful Judge. Thus as this holy man saith: He is made ready before the face of all people, not only of Jews, but also of heathens: And therefore he saith further [2]:—

(4) *Lumen ad revelatióncem* *A Light to enlighten the Gen-*
gentium: et glóriam plebis Tuæ *tiles: and to be the glory of Thy*
Israel. *people Israel.*

Compare this verse with the last verse of the *Benedictus*. *To enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.* It is the same thought, for it was said of Him Who is the Light of men, *the Light shining in the darkness which did not comprehend it* [3]. “The heathen were then all in darkness of misbelief, and therefore our Lord Jesus Christ was to them *Light*, to bring them out of all darkness into the *light* of Faith and Grace, as the Apostle St. Paul said to them afterwards: *Ye*

[1] *Ibid.*[2] *Ibid.*

[3] John i. 5.

were sometime darkness but now are light in the Lord [1]. The Jews that were in the *light* of right belief had great worship of our Lord Jesus, in that He took His Manhood amongst them of their own kindred. And therefore Simeon calleth Him the *Glory*, that is, the joy and the worship of the people Israel. . . . In this song our Lord Jesus Christ is called *Salvation, Light* and *Glory*. He is *Salvation* to sinners of mercy ; and whom He saveth from sin He enlighteneth by grace, and therefore He is called *Light* ; and whom He enlighteneth by grace He rewardeth by endless bliss, and so He is called the *Glory* of His people [2]."

GLORIA PATRI.

Glory be to the Father Who dismisses us in peace. Glory to the Son our Salvation. Glory to the Holy Ghost the Glory of Israel.

After the *Kyrie* and ordinary Versicles follows—

THE COLLECT.

*Beata et gloriósa semper
virginis Mariæ, quæsumus
Dómine, intercèssio gloriósa
nos prótegat : et ad vitam
perducát ætérnam. Per Dómi-
num nostrum, &c.*

*We beseech Thee, O Lord,
that the glorious intercession of
the blessed and glorious ever
Virgin Mary may protect us
and bring us to life eternal.
Through our Lord, &c.*

This short, simple, direct prayer includes everything and is a model for our own private prayers. It is only the second part of the Hail, Mary, that she may pray for us here and at the hour of our death. What can be simpler, more childlike and more true ?

This hour, unlike the others, ends up with a solemn invocation of the blessing of the Holy Trinity upon us now going to rest.

*Benedicat et custódiat nos
omnipotens et miséricors Dó-
minus, Pater, et Filius, et
Spíritus sanctus. Amen.*

*May the Almighty and mer-
ciful Lord, Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost, bless and guard us.
Amen.*

[1] Eph. v. 8.

[2] *Myroure*.

During Advent-tide.

The Little Chapter and Versicle are the same as at None during this season. And the Antiphon at the *Nunc Dimittis* as at Lauds, followed by the ordinary Advent Collect.

During Christmas-tide.

The Little Chapter and Versicle are as above ; the Antiphon at the *Nunc Dimittis* is the same as at the *Magnificat* during this season, together with the Christmas Collect.

During Easter-tide.

The Antiphon at the *Nunc Dimittis* is *Regina Cæli* (see page 429).

THE ANTIPHONS.

The following Antiphons of our Lady are said according to the Rubrics for the various seasons of the year. These concluding hymns seem to have been introduced into the Office by the Franciscans, who began to add them to the daily recital. St. Bonaventure, about 1274, is credited with being the first to add them to the Liturgical Prayer. Among the English Benedictines the use seems to have been general at an early date ; for by the acts of the Chapter of the English Congregation, held at Northampton, 1444, a decree was *renewed* ordering their recitation every day at the end of Compline, "in order before sleep to implore her help by whom the serpent's head was crushed." They were made of obligation to the whole Church by St. Pius V. in his reform of the Roman Breviary.

I.

From Vespers on the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent to the second Vespers of the Purification inclusively.

<i>Alma Redemptoris Mater,</i>	<i>Mother of Christ, hear thou</i>
<i>quæ p̄rvia cæli</i>	<i>thy people's cry,</i>
<i>Porta manes, et stella maris,</i>	<i>Star of the deep and portal of</i>
<i>succure cadenti,</i>	<i>the sky,</i>
<i>Surgere qui curat, p̄pulo : tu</i>	<i>Mother of Him Who thee from</i>
<i>quæ genuisti,</i>	<i>nothing made,</i>

*Natūra mirānte, tuum sanc-
tum Genitōrem,
Virgo prius ac postērius,
Gabriēlis ab ore
Sumens illud Ave, peccatōrum
miserēre.*

*℣. Angelus Dómini nuntiá-
vit Mariæ.*

*℞. Et concēpit de Spiritu
sancto.*

Oremus.

*Gratiam Tuam, quæsumus
Dómine, méntibus nostris in-
fúnde : ut qui, Angelo nunti-
ánte, Christe Fílii Tui incar-
natiónem cognóvimus, per
passiónem Ejus et crucem ad
resurrectiōnis gloriám perdu-
cámur. Per Eúndem, &c.*

*From the first Vespers of Christmas to the second Vespers of
the Purification (February 2nd) the following is said :—*

*℣. Post partum Virgo in-
violáta permansisti.*

*℞. Dei Génitrix intercède
pro nobis.*

*followed by the ordinary Christmas Collect: Deus qui salutis
æternæ, &c.*

This Antiphon, made up of words borrowed from St. Fulgentius, St. Epiphanius, and St. Irenæus, is said to have been composed by a Benedictine monk of the monastery of Reichenau, Herman Contractus, who died 1054. There is but little need for exposition as most of the expressions have been explained. *Cadenti populo*, the people, sinking beneath the black waters of sin, stretch forth their arms to Mary for help. *Natūra mirānte*. Nature struck with wonder at the unheard-of thing, a Virgin conceiving and bearing a Son, the Creature given birth to her Maker.

*Sinking we strive and call to
thee for aid :*

*O by that joy which Gabriel
brought to thee,*

*Thou Virgin, first and last, let
us thy mercy see.*

*The Angel of the Lord de-
clared unto Mary.*

*And she conceived by the
Holy Ghost.*

*Pour forth, we beseech Thee,
O Lord, Thy grace into our
hearts: that we who know the
Incarnation of Christ Thy Son
by the message of the Angel,
may by His Passion and Cross
be brought to the glory of His
Resurrection. Through the
same, &c.*

*After bearing thou didst
remain a maiden undefiled.*

*Mother of God intercede for
us.*

II.

From Compline on the Feast of the Purification till Easter.

<i>Ave Regina cœlorum :</i>	<i>Hail, O Queen of Heaven enthroned :</i>
<i>Ave Dómina Angelórum :</i>	<i>Hail, by angels Mistress crowned :</i>
<i>Salve Radix, salve Porta, Ex qua mundo Lux est orta.</i>	<i>Root of Jesse ; Gate of Morn ! Whence the world's true Light was born.</i>
<i>Gaude Virgo gloriósa, Super omnes speciósa,</i>	<i>Glorious Virgin, joy to thee ; Loveliest whom in Heaven they see,</i>
<i>Vale O valde decóra, Et pro nobis Christum exóra.</i>	<i>Fairest thou where all are fair Plead with Christ our sins to spare.</i>
<i>Ÿ. Dignáre me laudáre te, Virgo sacráta.</i>	<i>Make me worthy to praise thee O Blessed Virgin.</i>
<i>R̃. Da mihi virtútem con- tra hostes tuos.</i>	<i>Give me strength against thine enemies.</i>

The prayer is the common prayer at Vespers : *Concede misericors.*

The author of this Antiphon is not known. Like the former, the various praises are to be found in the works of the fathers of the Church, and the expressions used have been already explained, *i.e.*, *Radix*, the stem of Jesse ; *Porta*, the Gate closed to all except the Lord, and also the Gate through which the Day-spring from on high hath visited us. *Super omnes speciósa*. The grace of the stainless Conception was increased by that of the Divine Motherhood ; and then, once more, by that of the Sanctification in the Pentecostal Fires. Thus, as the grace which possessed the soul of our ever dear and blessed Lady far exceeded that of any created being, so was her spiritual beauty above that of all others. "Thou art all fair, O Mary, and the stain of original sin is not in thee," sings Holy Church on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

III.

From Compline on Holy Saturday to None on the Saturday after Pentecost inclusively.

Regina cæli lætare, Alleluia,

*Joy to thee, O Queen of heaven,
Alleluia,*

*Quia Quem meruisti portare,
Alleluia,*

*He Whom thou wast meet to
bear, Alleluia,*

*Resurrexit sicut dixit. Alle-
luia.*

*As He promised hath arisen.
Alleluia.*

*Ora pro nobis Deum. Alle-
luia.*

*Pour forth to Him thy prayer.
Alleluia.*

*¶. Gaude et lætare Virgo
Maria, Alleluia.*

*Rejoice and be glad, O
Virgin Mary, Alleluia.*

*℞. Quia surrexit Dominus
vere. Alleluia.*

*For the Lord is truly risen.
Alleluia.*

Oremus.

Let us pray.

*Deus, qui per resurrectionem
Filii Tui Domini nostri Jesu
Christi mundum lætificare dig-
natus es: præsta quæsumus,
ut per Ejus Genitricem Vir-
ginem Mariam perpétua capiám-
us gaudia vitæ. Per eúndem,
&c.*

*O God, Who by the rising of
Thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ,
hath vouchsafed to fill the
world with joy: grant, we
beseech Thee, that by His
Mother, the Virgin Mary, we
may attain the joys of eternal
life. Through the same, &c.*

In 596, during Easter-time, a pestilence was ravaging Rome, and St. Gregory the Great appointed a procession to be held to avert the scourge. On the day appointed he came with his clergy at dawn to the church of *Ara Cæli* and, bearing in his hand the picture of our Lady attributed to St. Luke, he set out in procession to St. Peter's. But whilst passing what was then called the Castle or Mole of Hadrian, voices were heard high up in the air singing *Regina Cæli*. The holy Pope, astonished and enraptured, replied with a loud voice: *Ora pro nobis Deum. Alleluia*. At that moment an Angel shining with a glorious light appeared and sheathed the sword of pestilence in its scabbard. The plague ceased from that day. The name was then changed from that of the Emperor to the Castle of San

Angelo, and the heavenly words were inscribed on the roof of the church of *Ara Cæli*. In memory of the event the religious of that convent used to sing the Antiphon whenever any public procession passed their church. This simple anthem is one burst of joy which recalls the exultation which filled the heart of our ever dear and blessed Lady when, on that Resurrection Day, she first saw her Son in the glory of the new life. The Angels share in this joy and call upon us to join with them in the heavenly song of *Alleluia*.

IV.

From the first Vespers of Trinity Sunday to None on the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent.

Salve Regina, Mater misericordiæ, Vita, Dûlcêdo, et Spes nostra, salve.

Ad te clamâmus êxsules, filii Hevæ. Ad te suspirâmus gemêntes et flentes in hac lacrymârûm valle.

Eia, ergo, Advocâta nostra, illos tuos misericôrdes ôculos ad nos converte.

Et Jesum benedictum Fructum ventris tui, nobis post hoc exiliûm ostênde.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.

¶ Ora pro nobis, &c.

R. Ut digni, &c.

Mother of Mercy, Hail, O gentle Queen ; our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope, all hail.

Children of Eve, to thee we cry from our sad banishment ; to thee we send our sighs, weeping and mourning in this tearful vale.

Come, then, our Advocate ; O turn to us those pitying eyes of thine. And our long exile past, show us at last Jesus, of thy pure womb the Fruit Divine.

O Virgin Mary ! Mother blest ! O sweetest, gentlest, holiest !

Pray for us, &c.

That we may, &c.

Omnipotens sempitérne Deus, qui gloriósæ Virginis Matris Mariæ corpus et ánimam, ut dignum Filii Tui habitáculum éffici mererétur, Spíritu sancto cooperánte præparásti : da, ut cujus commemoratióne lætámur, ejus pia intercessióne ab instántibus malis et a morte perpétua liberémur. Per éundem Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

O Almighty and Eternal God, Who hath prepared by the co-operation of the Holy Ghost the body and soul of the Virgin-mother Mary as an abode worthy for Thy Son, grant that we who rejoice in her commemoration, may by her kind intercession be freed from present evils and from death eternal. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

This Antiphon is sung for six months in the year. It is generally attributed to the Benedictine monk, Herman Contractus. St. Bernard, it is said, added the last invocation during a visit to the Abbey of Affligheim. The Antiphon, which is expanded at length by St. Alphonsus, in "The Glories of Mary," is very sweet. Its fragrance lingers over our soul when, at the end of a long day, or at the end of any hour, we place our prayers in Mary's hands, that she, the pure and glorious one, may offer it with all the power of a Mother's love to her God, to that Son, the blessed Fruit of her womb. Thus do we put all under her care ; and we go to Jesus, the Door of Life Eternal, through her, the appointed Gate. *All for Jesus through Mary*, as one of her servants used to say. Our prayers coming through her hands will be doubly acceptable to her Son ; and we shall be the sooner heard for the reverence He has for His Mother.

At the end of the Antiphon is said :—

¶. Divinum auxílium máneat semper nobiscum.

May the Divine assistance remain with us alway.

Rq. Amen.

Amen.

PATER. AVE. CREDO.

And this closes the Office. We began by calling on God to come to our aid. He has heard our prayer, now as always. So we conclude by asking that His help should be ever with us ; for His grace is sufficient to free us from *present evils* and

from death eternal, and to bring to us the joys of life eternal. This powerful assistance, which the Divine Goodness has given to men, is the love of Mary, the Mother of Divine grace, exalted by her Son to be the Refuge of sinners and the Help of the afflicted. She is the appointed channel of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ to man ; for having given us our Saviour, she gives us all things in Him.

A PRAYER AFTER THE OFFICE.

In respect of which Pope Leo X. has granted to all persons who, after saying the Office, shall devoutly recite it on their knees, forgiveness of the shortcomings and faults of human weakness committed by them in saying the Office.

To the most holy and undivided Trinity :

To the Manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ crucified :

To the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a virgin :

And to the whole body of all the Saints :

Be praise everlasting, honour and glory from all creatures :

And to us the forgiveness of all our sins. World without end. Amen.

℣. Blessed be the womb of the Virgin Mary which bore the Son of the Eternal Father.

℞. And blessed be the breasts that gave suck to Christ the Lord.

PATER. AVE.

FINIS.

APPENDIX.

That ye may approve the better things, that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruit of righteousness through Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God [1].

CEREMONIAL.

Let all things be done decently and in order, says St. Paul [2]. The use of Ceremonial is towards this end, and is inspired by the spirit of reverence. In the following we offer suggestions, based upon the practices of well-organised communities, which have been found to answer.

(1) At the sound of the bell the community meet at some place outside the chapel and form into two ranks, the youngest nearest the entrance, the Superior last. At the given signal they enter the choir, two and two, and, after genuflecting, proceed to their respective stalls.

(2) Kneeling, they say silently the introductory prayer.

(3) When the Superior gives the signal (by a tap on the desk) they rise, and bowing profoundly (so that the tips of fingers may touch the knees), say in silence the *Ave Maria*.

(4) At the signal, all turning Eastward (*i.e.*, towards the altar), the Superior, or the Hebdomadary, that is, the one who for the week conducts the service, begins *Domine lábia mea apéries*, making a sign of the Cross upon the lips; then, *Deus in adjutórium meum inténde*, making the sign of the Cross on the whole person.

(5) At the *Gloria* all turn, facing each other, and bow profoundly.

[1] Phil. i. 10, 11.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 40.

(6) Then the first Cantor goes into the middle to the Lectern and commences the Invitatory, to which both sides of the choir respond. The Psalm is said by the Cantor. On the greater festivals two Cantors should be used.

(7) In the third verse at the words *Venite adorémus* all kneel till the words *Nos autem*, when they rise for the repetition of the Invitatory.

(8) The first line of the Hymn is given out by the first Cantor and the rest of the verse is taken up by his side of the choir; then the second choir take up the second verse, and so on, both choirs joining in and bowing profoundly for the last verse.

(9) The Antiphon is given out by the first Cantor, and also the Psalm up to the asterisk, then all his side of the choir take it up. At the end the Cantor repeats the Antiphon, and the second Cantor from the other side begins the second Antiphon and Psalms.

(10) While the Psalms are being said the choir can recline in their stalls or sit down.

(11) A short pause ought to be made just after the last verse, and all, rising and bowing profoundly, say the *Gloria Patri*.

N.B.—This always takes place before the *Gloria Patri* whenever said at the end of a Psalm.

(12) The Psalms over, all rise; the first Cantor says the Versicle, to which all respond.

(13) The Superior, or Hebdomadary, says *Pater noster* aloud, then all, bowing, continue it in secret till *Et ne nos*, which is said by the Superior aloud, and all, rising, make the answer.

(14) The Superior then gives the Absolution.

(15) The Reader goes to the lectern and after genuflecting turns, bowing towards the Superior, and says *Jube domine*. After the blessing, given by the Superior, to which all reply *Amen*, the choir sits while the Reader reads the Lesson.

(16) At the end of the Lesson the choir, started by the Cantor, say the Responsory; but the Versicle is said by the Reader, who having said it retires to his place, while the next one in order comes out to read the second Lesson.

(17) The Superior, or Hebdomadary, ought to read in his

place the Third Lesson, during which, if it be the Superior, all stand out of respect.

(18) The Lessons over, the *Te Deum* is started by the Cantor, all rising and facing eastward.

(19) At the *Te ergo* all kneel, facing one another, rising at the next verse.

(20) If Matins is not followed at once by Lauds, after the *Te Deum* the Versicle, *Domine exáudi oratiónem*, with the Prayer from Lauds and the concluding Versicles, are said. Otherwise—

AT LAUDS.

(1) All turning towards the east, the Superior or Hebdomadary begins, making the sign of the Cross, *Deus in adjutórium*. At the *Gloria* all turn, facing one another, and bowing profoundly, say the *Gloria Patri*.

N.B.—This ceremonial is used at all the hours.

(2) The first Cantor starts the first Antiphon and Psalm and repeats the former at the end, and so with the third and fifth.

(3) The second Antiphon and Psalm are started by the second Cantor, and so with the fourth.

(4) During the Psalms in this and all other hours the choir recline in their stalls or sit, as the custom may be. The former for preference.

(5) If it is found that the reciting note is lowered after several Psalms, at the *Laudate* it will be well for the first Cantor to raise the pitch when giving out the Antiphon.

(6) The Psalmody over, all rise and face eastward while the Superior, or the Hebdomadary, says the Little Chapter, to which all answer, *Deo Gratias*. Then, all turning faceways, the first Cantor gives out the first line of the hymn and all his side continue it. The second verse is said by the opposite choir, and all bow during the last verse.

(7) The Versicle is said by the Cantor, and all make the Response.

(8) Then he starts the Antiphon and the *Benedictus*.

(9) At the *Canticle*, which is to be said more solemnly

than the rest of the Office, all turn eastwards and make the sign of the Cross.

N.B.—This is done at the three Canticles. The *Gloria* is said as usual.

(10) After the repetition by the Cantor of the Antiphon, the first Cantor's side start *Kyrie eleison*, to which the second Cantor's side respond *Christi eleison*, both sides joining in the last invocation. Then the Superior, or Hebdomadary, says the Versicles, to which all respond, and the prayer, during which all except the reciter bow profoundly, rising to answer *Amen*. Then follows the Commemoration. All say the Antiphon; the Cantor follows with the Versicle, to which all respond; the Superior, or other, recites the prayer.

(11) After the concluding Versicles, all bow while saying together in secret the *Pater*, rising for the *Dominus det nobis*.

(12) All then kneel (except from Saturday Vespers until after Sunday's Compline and during Paschal time, when all remain standing, but facing eastwards) for the Antiphon of our Lady, which being over, after a few moments' private prayer, all retire as they entered. Having arrived at the appointed place (called the *statio*) the Superior passes through the ranks and turning, salutes each side, and then all depart in peace.

THE LITTLE HOURS.

(1) These are said in the same way.

(2) The Hymn comes before the Psalms.

VESPERS.

(1) All as at Lauds, with the following exception :—

(2) In the second Psalm all bow while saying the *Sit nomen Dómini benedictum*.

(3) All kneel for the first verse of the *Ave Maria stella*.

COMPLINE.

(1) The *Converte* is said turned eastwards.

(2) The rest of the Office as above.

(3) The Superior gives the final blessing, during which all bow profoundly.

(4) The Antiphon of our Lady follows at once.

SOME GENERAL SUGGESTIONS.

(1) If the Antiphons are sung the Antiphons are taken up by both sides of the choir.

(2) There should be, if possible, two Cantors, one for either side of the choir. The ruling of the choir should change every Saturday [1] at Vespers for the ensuing week, so that each side in turn should have the first Cantor.

(3) The Hebdomadary should also take office from Saturday evening; but the Superior always presides and leads the Office on the greater feasts.

(4) The ordinary form of the Office is said from the Matins of February 3 until the Vespers of the Saturday before the first Sunday in Advent. The only change during Paschal time is the Antiphon at the Three Canticles.

(5) The Advent Office is said from the Vespers of the Saturday preceding the First Sunday of Advent until after None on Christmas Eve.

(6) The Christmas Office begins at the Vespers on Christmas Eve and goes on till after Compline on February 2.

(7) The Paschal Office begins at Vespers on Holy Saturday and continues till after None Whit Sunday.

(8) On the feast of the Annunciation (even when transferred) the Office from Vespers of the Eve until Compline of the feast is said according to the Advent Rite [2].

(9) From the beginning of Vespers on the Saturday before Septuagesima until the beginning of Vespers on Holy Saturday, Alleluia is omitted and *Laus tibi Domine Rex æternæ gloriæ* is said instead.

(10) *Te Deum* is not said, except on feasts of our Lady (even when transferred) in Advent, or from Septuagesima until Easter.

N.B.—The feasts of our Lady are those observed in the diocese.

(11) During Passion time the *Gloria* is to be said as usual.

(12) It is forbidden during the three days of Holy Week

[1] The Sunday celebration begins with Saturday Vespers.

[2] S.R.C., July 16, 1866, ad. iii.

to recite the Little Office *publicly* [1]. On these days it would be more in the mind of the Church to say the Greater Office.

(13) On these days which are kept as doubles in the diocesan calendar, all the Antiphons to the Psalms and Canticles have to be said in full before and after. Hence the term double, *i.e.*, the Antiphon *doubled* [2].

(14) When several Little Hours are said together, separately from Lauds, *Pater noster* is only said after the last one. When Compline is followed immediately after Matins, the concluding Pater, Ave, and Credo must be said before the *Ave Maria* of Matins.

(15) In private recitation it will be well to observe, as far as possible, the ceremonial of the choir; being mindful of the words of the Psalmist: *In the sight of the Angels will I sing praises unto Thee; I will worship towards Thy holy Temple, and will praise Thy Name because of Thy loving-kindness and Truth* [3].

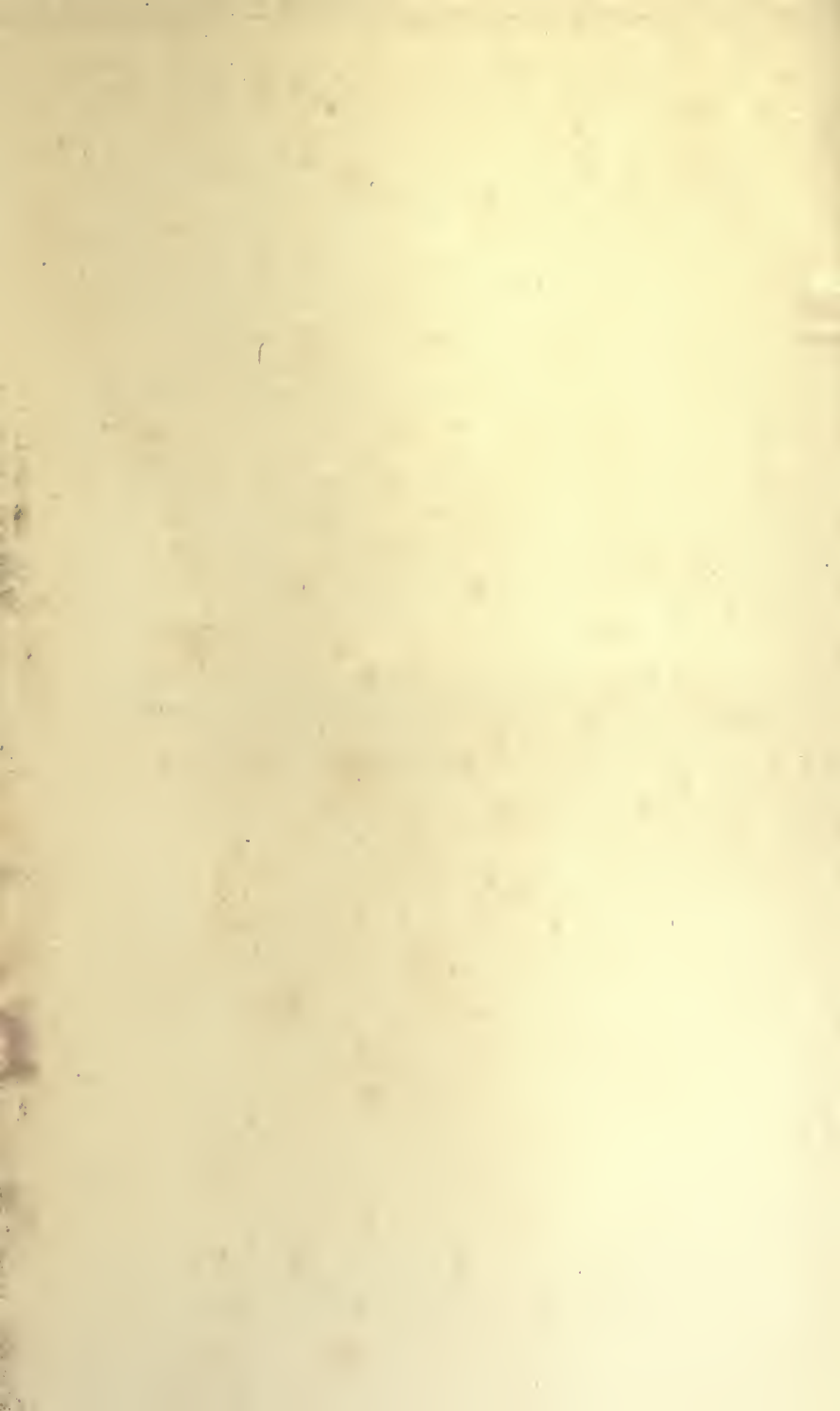
That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to Whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen [4].

[1] S.R.C., July 16, 1866, ad. iv.

[2] S.R.C., July 16, 1866, ad. iv.

[3] Ps. cxxxvii. 2.

[4] 1 Peter iv. 11.





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